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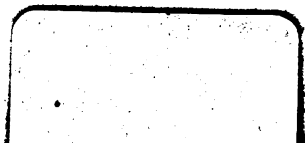
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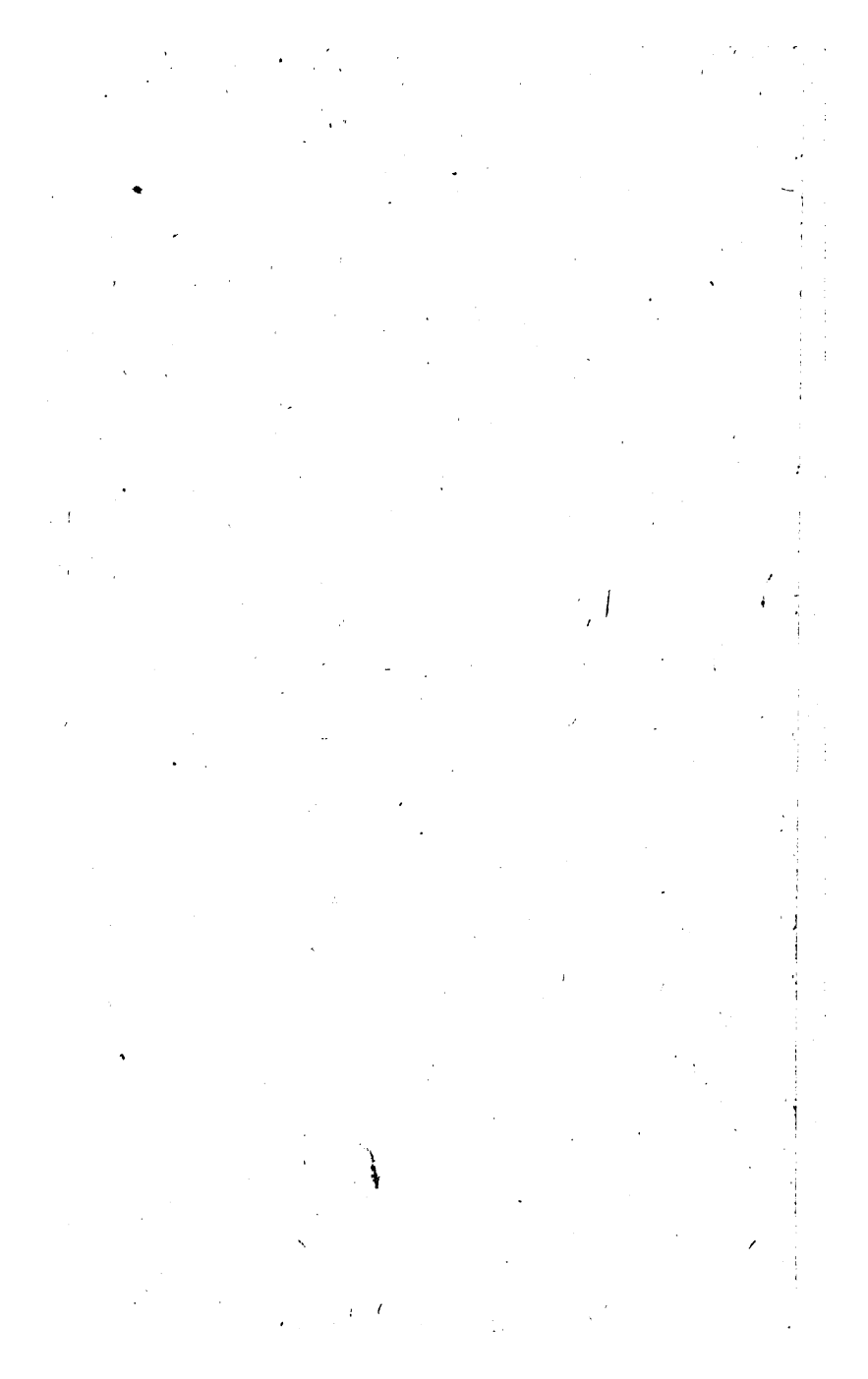
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# ROUGH RECOLLECTIONS

OF

RAMBLES, ABROAD AND AT HOME.

BY

CALDER CAMPBELL.

Author of "THE PALMER'S LAST LESSON" etc.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

L O N D O N :

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1847.

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# ROUGH RECOLLECTIONS

## CHAPTER I.

MY FRIEND PENROSE.—YOUNG LADIES MADE UP  
FOR THE EAST INDIAN MATRIMONIAL MART.—  
SKETCHES OF CHARACTER.—THE HALF-CASTE  
WIFE.

In my course of desultory reading, I recollect coming upon a sweetly written fiction, called "Ormond" in which I was so struck by the following passage that I copied, and now

quote it, as a peg on which to hang some *aftermath* of thought:—" Whence (says the " author) can arise, in human creatures, this " disposition to disturb the peace of those " we love, and by whom they ought to have " the deepest conviction that they themselves " are beloved ? Whence can proceed that " mysterious propensity which impels the " victim of passion to be for ever sounding " the unfathomable depths of human feelings " *to find materials for its own misery ?*"

My friend Penrose was a most undisciplined self-torturer ; and the above observation came vividly to my remembrance one evening, as sitting in the veranda of Captain M's castellated bungalow, I read a letter I had just received from Penrose, who, for the twentieth time, was involving himself in all the inextricable intricacies of a woman's heart—fancying himself in love—coquetted

with—yet adored ; and finally working himself up to the extreme pitch of death or matrimony, a dose of laudanum or a license. The amount of the truth of the case lay in the narrow compass of the certainty, on my part, that the young lady neither loved him, nor was capable of loving any body. She was quite an ephemeral, heartless creature—a *creation* of modern rearing-up for the East Indian marriage mart ; and, at times, Penrose was convinced of these unwholesome facts. But, noble and fine fellow as he was, his imagination was so keen, his passions so fervid, that he was more fitted than many men of not one third of his capacity, to become the dupe of an artful designing girl. Captain M. was not come back from his afternoon ride, and had promised to bring home with him a few friends to chat away

the evening over a grill, so I sat down at his desk and wrote a letter.

“ My dear Penrose, I can only laugh at your somewhat stale trick of persisting to nurse a passion, which not only can never be returned, but which is also unworthy of you, since the object is one of those every day baubles of animated, painted clay, which sell themselves to the highest bidder. Love you she never did—you yourself confess it : love you she never will, for she is unequal to such a glorious undertaking, How a mind like yours, Penrose, should have thus succumbed to the inferiority of such a tinsel intellect as that which Eliza Lane possesses, is to me an unsolvable enigma. But your heart is yet young in the :

“ Nympholepsy of a fond despair.”

" Its feelings are ardent with the cravings for a *genuine* passion...with the *besoin d'aimer* ; and led astray by every bright meteor that crosses your path, you fancy each in its turn a comet. Eliza is wholly unintellectual : *soul* there is none to inhabit that beautiful lay-figure, over which so many deceitful charms have been thrown by the profuse liberality of nature. She is, in sooth, one of the Moslem's seraglio-breed—

" A soul-less toy for tyrants—"

but the innocent harmlessness of the bijou is wanting to complete the truth of the picture. There are art, arrogance, and avarice, and vanity swelling in that fair bosom,...too fair a nest to harbour so foul a brood ! Look around you, look into the sanctuary of your own heart, occupied too long by so unworthy

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with the most sanguine dreams of future aggrandizements...dreams, like Distaffina's, of

"Pots and pans all turn'd to gold."

these pitiable girls become smiling victims at the shrine of ambition, and shine their short hour at one of the three Presidencies, until "*an establishment*" is obtained; when matrimony, that consummation of their aspirations, sinks them into frigid wives and frivolous mothers. The mind, destroyed by unwise culture, seldom recovers the powers of fecundity; or produces nothing but weeds. There are your acquaintances...Julia, Anna, and Louisa Pentecost. What can such gewgaw nonentities do to render the marriage state an improvement on celibacy? What are they more than the "butterflies born in a bower" of which the song tells? Julia

sings, but she sings just as a barrel-organ plays...it is the mere mechanism of the lungs, trained by tuition ; there are words and sounds...cadenzas, roullades, and 'dying falls : ' but there is no feeling, no taste. The anatomy is perfect ; nay, it is clothed passing well with flesh, but there is no soul, no life withal. Anna has beautiful blue eyes, and a beautiful blue eternal gown, and she sits (at visiting hours) before a beautiful sofa-table, and there are pallet, pencils paints before her : she draws a pretty, tempting, yellowish, lumpy thing...nameless to a botanist, or even a gardener...but *she* calls it a PEACH. It is voted true to nature, lauded to the skies as a *chef-d-œuvre*—but it is very much like an onion, daubed over with ochre sauce, after all ! Louisa is surrounded by the latest publications : a volume of Mrs. Grey's last novel is on her lap ; Emma



Roberts's matchless 'Indian Sketches' peeps out of her work-corbeille, where it lies *half hid for show*, among finished frills and unfinished bead-purses. The last 'Book of Beauty' glares before her, in felicitous juxta position with a vase full of *Gloriosa superbas* ; while Fanny Kemble's phillipics, *con* America discarded to the floor, look bilious from bad treatment. The fair, or rather blue Louisa talks loudly of the march of intellect, sentiment, and sonnets : regards Keats and Leigh Hunt despisingly, but admires Byron, and defines the word "*passion*." She rather under-rates Crabbe—"nature is so unnatural ;" but adores Moore—"his angels are so charmingly *man-like*." She looks upon "Henrietta Temple" as an apocalypse of the most startling splendour ; votes Miss Martineau "the Thalaba of taste ;"—and after quoting a thousand truisms and stolidi-

ties—uttered in the *patois* of fashion—deprecates the ridicule of her auditors by an artilleryism of the finest black eyes in the world ! And thus it is with almost all our Indian belles : they are fully competent to grace a banquet, or to glide through a ball-room ; they commit waltzery with a languishing look and an *abandon* of person with which no man, until he becomes the husband of the *danseuse*, can find fault. But arouse thee, Penrose ; thou wert born for better love than that thou art pursuing. Thou art mistaking the mist of the mirage for the lustre of the lake—but thou *must* recover. The sight of beauty acts upon you like the bite of the Dipsas-snake, which produces insatiable thirst ; but it is only when accompanied by sense, when impregnated with rational piety, and intellectual energy, that Beauty becomes a health-

ful fountain, whose delicious waters bestow true felicity on whosoever imbibes their "treasures hyaline." Personal charms may *win* a heart, but only intellect and virtue can *keep* it !

"I will tell you, Penrose, a little event that occurred here the other day, to show you how slight a trifle may sometimes elicit the devil lurking in a woman's nature. For the nonce, I shall imitate you, and *fancy* myself a lover while I despairingly narrate the destruction of my hopes...and all through a pair of *shoes* ! It seems that our clever friend, Claude Roberts, is the author of that series of papers in our best Madras journal, entitled "The Hermit in India ;" and in a recent article he lucubrated in a strain of playful sarcasm on the subject of ladies' feet and ladies' shoes—condemning as utterly *rococo*, vulgar, and below the

salt, every woman guilty of wearing such inodoriferous, clumsy articles as are manufactured by our native *chucklers* (shoemakers), instead of procuring such as are of French origin. Oh, atrocious Roberts! because thy worthy father has written the "Life of Hannah More," is *that* any reason that you should meddle with the *chaussure de dames*? Why shouldst *thou* be a "LAST Man?" He has crushed to atoms the sweetest *chateau en espagne* that ever aerial artisan erected! He has annihilated by a single *coup de la plume* a centenary of ecstatic hopes, that—like spotted butterflies round a rose...were fluttering about my heart with a potency of beauty that was, alas! but too ephemeral! I would that he was condemned to inhale the odours of tan and tough leather for ever! I would that he were fed to all eternity on stewed

sheepskin and parboiled cheveril! I would that I had the power of Visconti, that cruel Duke of Milan, who commanded that the execution of one delinquent should be prolonged for an entire year; and then I should order him to receive a dozen thwacks of the bastinado daily, until his sole was sole no more! How should *I* know that Selina—but listen, my sympathizing Penrose.

“Selina Skuttleback is not one of those young ladies who assail you, like a swarm of gadflies, from every fresh ship that reaches Madras. She was not sent, when rising thirteen, to a fashionable seminary in the purlieus of Kennington, where instructions were given that she should be educated for India. She does not draw a little, nor play a little, nor talk French a little, nor sing Italian a little. She does not paint

red cabbages and call them peonies ; neither does she dislocate her ten fingers by flinging them simultaneously on a piano, thereby eliciting a cacaphonous series of sounds, which she calls "*Something by Thalberg.*" No ; she is—or was—in my opinion, accomplished down to the very extremities,...as a lady once said ; and I had really began to imagine her quite a faultless monster, when the other evening, as we were talking dense cerulean, one unlucky remark of mine, proceeding from my innocence touching leather, awoke me from all my illusory hopes.

" We had been descanting on the late literary works of the day ; we had decided that *this* novel was a case of failure—that a decided *épopée* ; one was voted a bore—another *premier crû*. At last we spoke of our orientals, coinciding in admiring J. B. Fraser and D. L. Richardson—as who does

not? 'And what do you think of "The Hermit in India"?' questioned she; 'is he not a—'

" 'Oh, decidedly!' interrupted I, like a blundering idiot, conceiving most inopportunistly that her opinion on this point, as on the others, tallied with my own:—'he is a most talented creature...quite a literary lion. I could hug the fellow for his castigation of ladies who are in the habit of wearing *chuckler's shoes*!'

"Here was the rubicon, and I had passed it. We had for the last ten minutes been walking up and down the veranda; but now the fair arm that rested within mine was violently jerked away; a fire flashed from those hitherto dovelike eyes that would have scorched a salamander to cinders; and in a voice—oh, Jupiter Tonans! how different from its usual tone!...a voice loud as

a kulera horn, and brassy, and shrill, she shouted...‘*I* always wear country-made shoes, and the fusty old hermit and his admirers are a pack of ninnyhammers!’ With that she bounced away like a shot from a culverin ; overturning in her progress an unoffending red velvet *mora* (footstool), and treading on the tail of a pet munghoose until it shrieked ‘*misericordia*’ in its own tongue. I was horror-struck ! The angel of yesterday was the demon of to-day ! She looked the embodiment of a tempest, and walked a visible whirlwind ! An ice-bolt seemed to have got into my blood, and my dream of fancied perfection melted into thin air. Can I forgive Roberts for being the original cause of my disenchantment ? Never ! I shall in future regard his sketches as the direful cabala of some “*diable boiteux*,” whose necromantic *exposés* have destroyed my visions



of bliss. Or, suppose I turn character-describer myself, and for your diversion toss you up a few sketches, just as a *Cuisinière* will toss up an omelette souffléé. Yes, here are a trio of Miss Skuttleback's lovers to begin with :

“ Walter Mac Snuffle is a Scotchman, and one of the genus *Reptilia*—in military parlance, a *suck*, or *sneak*. He is the man from whom Glover by anticipation made his sketch in *Leonidas* :

——“ thro' the servile court,  
Yet none was found more practised in the arts  
Of mean submission ; none more skilled to gain  
The royal favour ; none who better knew  
The phrase, the look, the gesture of a slave !”

He is not a person who has no opinion of his own. He *has* an opinion of his own, but he lays it by in the narrow and dusky

crypt of his wily breast, to take up that of the person he wishes to make his friend, his patron, or his tool. He is a man who always hangs his quiver in the gaudiest belt. When he enters a room—which he does awkwardly, his long arms dragged back, and pinned to his sides—he peers from under his beetling brows with his small toady eyes, and instantly singles out him, or those, who are to be the worshipped for the hour. I think he must be endowed with a sense of smell more powerful than is common, out of the canine species, for he seems to discover rank by a snuff of the nostrils. Smells rank rankly, then? I know not: but his devotion is always tacked to the sleeve of that officer in the Division, or Garrison, or Regiment (as may be), who has most influence in it. The Staff, too, are minor gods, and in the absence of the Bel and Dagon,

have all his oblations. He has a wonderful penchant for an influential man. He discovers one by instinct—like those little French dogs which dig up truffles and champignons. Perhaps *they* are trained to it—in which case the simile holds not good. If there should prove to be any truth in the doctrine of Pythagoras, I shall expect to meet Mac Snuffle hereafter in the shape of a pot-licking turnspit...a sly, specious fox...or a bat of that species which inhabits the Brazilian woods. On the approach of night, it seeks the couch of the belated woodcutter, where, by the strange humming of its wings, it hushes him to a deep sleep ; and then, fixing its fangs in the breast of its victim, it drinks his heart's blood !...After all, however, he may only become a leech : or a worm...crawl, crawl, crawling on to “ immortal smash.” Mac Snuffle has robbed me

of three of my friends, merely by inuendos ...by "hinting a fault and hesitating a dislike." Yet he is the mildest of mild men, his tones are cajoleries, his words smooth as molten *ghæe*. He seldom contradicts ; when he does, it is where there is but one antagonist, and that one "no man of weight in the parish ;" no official animalcule. He is a man-chameleon, and is of whatever colour most prevails around him. He can "look the flower, but be the serpent under it ;" and has undoubtedly inhaled the scent of that plant, "the odour of whose leaves breedeth a scorpion in the brain." The Italian proverb suits him well, and (counting his country) amagrammatically :—

" Chi ha far com Tosco  
Non vuole esser loscod."

Which may be doggrelized into—

"He who hath to do with Scot,  
Should be no greenhorn, well I wot."

He is, in conclusion, a fine specimen of the *Phusalophogós*, or Toadeater. His attentions to Selina may be ascribed to the influential position of her uncle at Head Quarters.

"A very different person is her second admirer. Mr. Peter Penny. He is but five feet four, and in dimensions his mind is as stunted as his body. With a figure that by no mean conveys an idea of anatomical beauty, he possesses a countenance most admirably calculated to form a study for young pictorial practitioners in the caricature line. Yet in this little man's little brain some strange chance has contrived to accumulate a mass of conceit quite sufficient to stock a whole synod of Edinburgh meta-

physicians, or Cheapside drapers' apprentices. He is, or thinks he is—which is not quite the same thing—a perfect 'lady's man;' but his conversation—if his talk can merit such an appellation—is composed of a cento from all the most common common-places extant. In personal appearance he esteems himself an Adonis,—in mental *vis* he considers himself an intellectual Colossus. His latent parsimony exhibits itself by his continually recurring remarks on extravagance, debt, and personal expenditure; in his shabby, ill made habiliments, formed of the cheapest materials, and in his extreme predilection for sales, auctions &c., where he can pick up all sorts of third hand articles. I begin to think that Miss Skuttleback encourages Mr. Penny *solely* because he patronizes her pet *chuckler*.

“ Then comes Mr. Colin Clanalphin—quite

a contrast to his rival : the zenith to Penny's nadir. Reared by a romantic mother, and associating up to his seventeenth year with a triad of sentimental sisters, he is a Sappho in pantaloons and a regimental jacket. With a wild perverted fancy, too often mis-called genius, and a knack at rhyming, frequently misnomered poetry, he openly prides himself on his science as a botcher of ballads, a composer of couplets, and a coiner of *concetti*. In his appearance he is raw and ungainly, while his manners are effeminately bland and maidish. He speaks in a whisper, walks as though he trod upon violets, and smiles with an indefatigability that is as tiresome as it is silly : He has fine teeth.— His conversation has but one colour, and that is *blue*. He professes moon-worship, calls Endymion the idol of his soul, and quotes the poets of the Ladies' Museum by

bushels. He is enamoured of flowers, from the eglantine that luxuriates in the hedge-row to the syringa that reminds him of Ovid ; and he “ babbles of green fields,” until his hearers become infected with a land-calenture, and look like candle-lights in a ghost-haunted hall. He detests all manly spots and masculine pastimes ; calls sportsmen ‘ patronizers of the atrocities of Nimrod, and Mæcenases of Manton ;’ and has been known to faint at the sudden going-off of a musket. He says that a person who does *punster* is the debased antithesis of intellectual capacity ; and he looks upon all cultivators of imperials and moustaches as having attained the very acme of Gothic barbarism.”

But here I was interrupted in my long-winded scribblements, by a call to supper ; and found that while I was lecturing my



friend Penrose, M. and his guest had contrived to get through a rubber of whist. In the course of the evening I mentioned Penrose's folly, knowing that my companions were his friends.

"Nay," cried M. "in your philippic against wives chosen in the East, you are unjust. There are numberless instances of good wives, excellent managers, and prudent mothers, among us ; and though I agree with you in condemning his choice of Miss Lane, I know many young women whom erroneous education and oriental fripperies have failed to corrupt ; for it is my opinion that there is naturally such a fund of indestructible good in the heart of woman, that it is a rare case to find one whom kindness, reason, and careful tending cannot cure of trivial imperfections."

"Woman is only another term for mis-

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fortune," said I, quoting an Arabian maxim.

"Phoo," said Golding, a married man—"you know nothing about it. Surely you remember at Madras, some twelve years ago, poor Fitzleigh and his wife."

"Ah, yes!" exclaimed I; "they were the happiest couple I ever knew."

"And yet," added Golding, "at one period he nearly broke his wife's heart, and by the reckless profligacy of his conduct, ran repeated risks of expulsion from the army. As it was, he was forced to go home with a broken constitution, and a fortune—once large—reduced to almost poverty. In England, he found that his changed circumstances proved a plea for the neglect he met with from the 'velvet friends' of his youth and wealth. There was one, however, who did not desert him—the *half caste* wife whom

he had wedded in India. There was one, who in the diminution of his greatness, never left him, as the butterfly will leave in its greedy inconstancy those flowers whose sweetness has been drank up by the sun and the shower. When all had forsaken him—from the titled friend, with star and ribbon, who had borrowed his gold but spurned the vulgarity of repayment, to the petted *tiger*, whose helpless infancy he had rescued from indigence and famine—there was *one* who never abandoned him:—but, when penury and calamity, like two dense clouds, gathered over his head, *she* felt that the downfall of his prosperity—which had banished others from his side—drew *her* nearer and nearer to him; who, dear as he was to her innocent heart when he was the gayest in every assemblage, was still more intensely loved now

when fate had flung him down from the pedestal on which it had raised him—even as a spoilt urchin will cast down in anger the vase of flowers which, in his momentary admiration, he has placed upon some elevated stand !”

“ Bravo !” cried Elwin ; “ you grow quite poetical, Rob Roy has bit you.”

“ And produced *Bachelorophobia*,” said I ; “ but go on.”

“ When at first,” continued Golding — “ the wreck of fortune...that killer of unreal friends...withdrew from his mental eyes the film which vanity and worldly popularity will place over the firmest minds, *she* broke in upon the dark prison-house of his thoughts, like a gleam of hope ; and when after-days brought, at first repinings, then gloomy sullenness, then the wild prostration of sense and intellect that would fain drown

every painful recollection in the fatal witchery of distilled waters ;—nay, when at the very last, the madness of the wrung heart and scorched brain spurred and goaded him on to crime in its veriest debasement ; and sin, in every disgraceful shape...like those obscene carrion-birds that assemble round the uninhumed corse of some murdered traveller—flocked around his lost spirit, *she* forsook him not ; but with that true love, whose pure yet ardent light remains undimmed through the mists and fogs of life...amidst the malaria of degradation and infamy, *she* watched him in the silent agony of her solicitude, with a tearless eye but a withering heart...a mute or soothing tongue, but a spirit that unceasingly prayed for his return to virtue and to peace !

“ Oh ! deep, deep and holy mystery of Woman’s love ! What art thou that thus

gainest strength from surrounding fragility—  
that becomest most fertile when sterility  
besieges thee—that sparklest most brightly  
in the darkest mines of human suffering—  
that, like the manna of the wilderness,  
fallest sweetest when all else is hot, and  
hard, and dry?

“ And so *she* watched, and waited, and  
prayed, while the fiend was wrestling in his  
brain, and the dark angel was revelling in  
that bosom whereon to rest had been her  
chiefest blessing in their early hours of  
happiness. And her supplications were  
heard, and better hours came on to reward  
the cares of the tried wife. There was first  
a break in the clouds that hung over him---  
a dawn followed---next glided on the pure,  
certain light of morning, clearing away the  
exhalations of night, dispelling the vapours  
that floated about, like ghosts,---and awake-

ning all the blessed influences of external nature to healthful enjoyment; and then, last of all, the bright sun burst forth—intellect was restored—penitence pained, then healed the criminal spirit; and *she* who had done all this by unchanging love—by that piety which *whispers* its sweet counsels and does not *thunder* them dissonantly in the disgusted ear—and by that meek unwearied perseverance of fond womanhood, *she*—Emily Fitzleigh—a *Half-caste*, and educated in India...once more felt the sunbeam of peace rest upon her gentle heart, and her innocent head once more prest—in its beautiful delight—that pillow which she loved the most, the bosom of her retrieved husband!”

## CHAPTER II.

## THE STORY OF ELLEN MALDEN.

"Come," said I, as soon as Golding's voice had ceased to sound in our ears, "though I am no married man, like you and M., yet I can tell you a story of a wife—or rather of a Maid, Wife, and Widow, which may form no unworthy pendant to yours; but, as it is late, we shall reserve it for our next meeting."



“Be it so,” said Golding; “and as I am enacting bachelor during my good woman’s stay at the Presidency, let it be at my *mukaur* (place) to-morrow evening.” All agreed—all were there at the appointed hour...and I began—

### THE STORY OF ELLEN MALDEN.

THE evening was rough and stormy, when Ellen Malden, having filled her basket with trifling purchases, left the village of Hurst for the cottage of her aunt, three miles distant. Widow Ellis, her sole remaining relative, had seen better days; and though now reduced to comparative poverty, retained the esteem and good-will of all who had known her in happier times; while the neighbours readily placed their children at the little day-school which, assisted by her

niece, she had respectably conducted since unforeseen circumstances had involved her in difficulties that were sustained by her with pious submission, but neither inertly nor hopelessly; for Christianity had taught her to see the hand of One "who doth not willingly afflict," in all that had befallen her. Ellen had been detained at Hurst, and not till the swiftly-falling shadows of a surly October evening began to gather around, did she reach the solitary combe that stretched behind the cottage of her aunt.

A good as well as a pretty girl was Ellen Malden. The naturally amiable and right-thinking tone of her mind, fortified alike by early precept and example, had acquired, from the society of Mrs. Ellis, on whose bounty the decease of her parents had cast her in childhood, a bent and energy superior to her station. Yet, with an intellect more

highly cultivated than her companions could boast, she was free from assumption ; wisely concealing her own sense of the advantages which she had derived from nature and education, she excited neither envy nor aversion.

Propriety, modesty, and discretion marked her conduct ; but though she had many admirers, Ellen had no suitors in her own walk of life ; while she prudently avoided any enticement of accident that might lead her into the society of her superiors. But, alas ! she had soon the misfortune to attract the attentions of a young gentleman of property in the neighbourhood, who had more than once offended her unaffected delicacy by the ostentatious proffer of gifts, (which were invariably rejected), by fulsome and flattering speeches, that were never heeded ; and, latterly, by repeated attempts

to intrude on her moments of solitude. These trespasses on her quiet created great alarm in the mind of Ellen ; nor was her aunt free from apprehensions lest the conduct of Mr. Bligh should draw upon their humble, but hitherto respected names the obloquy that sometimes attaches even to the most spotless innocence.

Mr. Bligh was a handsome man, with an unhandsome mind. The fashionable world had infected him with its very worst vulgarities of folly ; and, mixing in its most corrupt and heartless circles, he had imbibed their strongest poison. A sceptic in the existence of chastity, he boldly avowed his belief that all men and women " had their price ;" the former he considered as knaves or fools, the latter as fair and willing game. With such a creed, he attributed the loathing abhorrence with which Ellen received his

addresses to nothing but art and coquetry ; and he only grumbled that so mere a country chit should exact what he deemed an undue share of his exertions, before he could prevail on her to own herself his slave.

The combe, through which Ellen was now passing, with a quick step, lay near the house of Mr. Bligh ; and her heart beat with accelerated motion, as suddenly a greyhound crossed her path, and in another moment, before she could retire or advance, Bligh himself stood before her. It is not consistent with the plan of this little sketch to repeat the fallacious arguments which the proud and presumptuous libertine made use of to beguile Ellen to his purposes. The specious sophistry, which so often fills the pages of our modern love tales, in the misapplied eloquence of their choicest heroes, shall not be imitated by us. Long, and subtly, and ar-

dently, he pleaded ; but he pleaded in vain: for his auditress, weak and trembling as she stood in the presence of a strong and wicked man, was powerful in the fortitude of a pure heart ; and as she repulsed him with disgustful horror, she breathed a prayer to Him who alone could aid her—nor was that prayer unheeded. In the heart of the libertine disappointed passion frequently prompts violence. A rude hand was stretched towards Ellen—her loud shriek rang echoing through the hills—and as she fell senseless on the ground, a faint idea of coming rescue was blended with the horrible terror that caused her to swoon.

When she recovered her senses, she found herself supported tenderly, but delicately, by a gentleman—for such the soft pressure of his small and ringed fingers and his kind and polished address denoted him. The increased

darkness prevented her from scanning his features ; but, as he soothed her excessive apprehensions by the assurances that her insulter had fled, she learned that her scream had reached him where he stood on a rising ground, not far from the scene of her rencontre with Mr. Bligh, and that he arrived just as she fell fainting to the earth.

“I had this stout cudgel,” said the unknown, “and the villain has tasted its vigour.”

Directed by the grateful girl, who was still too much agitated to walk unassisted, he led her to the cottage ; where her aunt, anxiously expecting her, and alarmed by her long absence, received her with maternal caresses...in her darling’s preserver recognizing Burnett Walton, the only son of an ancient but decayed family ; who, after an absence of several years with his regiment abroad,

had recently returned to visit his parents, and for the first time had seen the niece of his old acquaintance, Widow Ellis.

Thus they met...thus they saw each other; thus, seeing each other, they came to love each other : and who may dare to analyse the process by which love works its strange marvels on the human heart ? There is no bitterer evil than to place our affections on some bright " particular star," whose sphere we have no privilege to aspire at reaching ; and Ellen and Widow Ellis, and even Burnett himself, were not long blind to the disparity in birth and station that precluded all hopes of a union between them, save at such a price as none of them permitted their judgments to reflect upon. Yet day after day saw Burnett Walton at the cottage of Widow Ellis : there was a partridge he had shot, a basket of fruit he had gathered, or a nosegay



he had culled, for Ellen ; and so unassuming were his attentions, so perfectly free from aught that could offend the most scrupulous delicacy, that the words which were always ready to fall from their tongues to prohibit his visits, still remained unuttered.

At length he spoke his love, and then did the humbled widow fully perceive her error; and, while she blamed herself, she solemnly entreated him to renounce, at once for ever, a passion that could not end otherwise than fatally.—“He, who had saved her darling from the insults of a ruffian’s arm, would *he* endanger the peace, the reputation, the eternal happiness of an innocent though lowly maiden, whose birth and station rendered her alike unworthy of his *honourable* affection ? and a *dishonourable* feeling—oh !” (she implored him) “to harbour no thought

so degrading to the noble and high-souled race from which he had sprung !”

Mr. Bligh, meanwhile, baffled in his attempts, and perhaps ashamed of the chastisement which Captain Walton had inflicted, and to which his cowardly nature had sullenly submitted, had suddenly left the country ; and was now remembered by our lovers merely as the cause of their first interview. Alas ! that interview had been to them fraught with interest !

Burnett Walton was no seducer, but he was young, ardent, and romantic. Ellen—humbly born, in poverty, working for her daily bread, though educated above her station and possessing a heart that would confer dignity on any rank—was still unfit to be the bride of the last scion of a noble house ! What was to be done ? Alas ! the heart that hesitates on the brink of Error

has already advanced a step into the prohibited territories of Crime !

It was a glowing summer's eve. In a sheltered nook, amidst the woodlands that environed the cottage, two youthful forms were seen in earnest conversation. In tears—the tears of a yielding heart—Ellen Malden reclined on the shoulder of her tempter. She who hates the seducer has no merit in withstanding the seduction, and thus Bligh had failed to shake her virtue. It is she who loves, who idolizes the being that would selfishly mislead her, yet who resists his seductions, that is truly worthy : and Ellen Malden *did* resist—till, affrighted by the passionate vehemence of her lover's grief, she burst into tears, and sank on his shoulder.

“ Nay,” he cried, “ if you love me, Ellen, you will be mine. It is true that, were we

now to wed, my parents would cast me off for ever. But a short season of concealment, and all would be well. Consent to be mine—fly with me, and——”

“Oh! Mr. Walton,” said she, “would you, *could* you, cruelly let me live with you unwedded?”

“If you love me, Ellen, you will confide in me! Come, dearest, come with me.”

Ellen gazed on him for a moment, dreamily, almost wildly. She raised his hand to her lips, kissed it fondly, and—at once and suddenly relinquishing it—turned from him. She neither fled, nor fainted, nor shrieked; but, falling on her knees on the greensward, she prayed loudly and fervently to the Almighty to: “Save her! save her from the man who tempted her; above all, to save her from her *own heart!*”

Walton beheld the kneeling innocence before him with a new and singular emotion. A sensation of admiration, mingled with a sort of awe, crept over him, purifying every wild and wayward thought ; and a strange sight might have met the eyes of a wanderer, at that moment, amidst these woodlands,—for the young soldier flung himself on his knees beside that kneeling maiden ; and, shrouding his face in his hands, also prayed for that strength to subdue evil which no human being possesses, save from Heaven !——Were their prayers heard ? They were ! In a short space of time, those lovers...*now* how truly lovers !...rising from their knees, looked upon each other again. A sweet and holy serenity shed a beauty almost unearthly, on the delicate features of Ellen, as she met the sorrowful yet

chastened glances that spoke the rebuked spirit of her lover.

"God bless you," she whispered. "We must part. We *must*."

"Be it so, Ellen!"

He drew her towards him—she resisted not! He pressed one long and pure kiss on her cheek, which she withdrew not from that innocent pressure, and then, without another word or look, he turned from her and fled! —That night Ellen shed many tears, but they were not embittered by remorse. She prayed, and though at times she had sorrow, still she found peace! In a few days the virtuous cottagers were told that Captain Walton had sailed for India, having succeeded in effecting an exchange into a regiment recently ordered thither.

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Many years...some five or six...have passed since Burnett Walton and Ellen Malden were parted. There are partings where the farewell words are rainbowed over with the skyey hues of hope, and where the tears that accompany the sobbed-out adieu are glistening with the unconscious light of expectation ; but such was not the case with Ellen. There were no hopes ; for reason told her of the fallacy of such, in circumstances so entirely opposed to a re-union, as to have shaken the imaginings of the most sanguine dreamer. Such circumstances attended her separation from Walton : but, if hope refused to lend a roseate colour to the dark shadows of her disappointment, a consciousness of having fulfilled her duty, of having taught him whom she most loved on earth to imitate her sacrifice of all selfish feelings, spread a gentle and consoling influence over

her reflections ; so that her aunt had not the cares of her age embittered by beholding the sinking frame, the paling cheek, the mind that weakly succumbs to bootless sorrow—for Ellen wrestled, not manfully nor unfeelingly, but like a feeling yet a Christian girl, with the emotions that told her how strongly she loved the being from whom she believed herself separated for ever.

From time to time chance brought them intelligence of Captain Walton's welfare in the East Indies—of his gallant conduct on several occasions—of his promotion, and, finally, of his approaching nuptials with a wealthy lady of that country. Who shall say what Ellen's feelings were on these occasions ? It is useless to deny that even our most desperate fears may end in a certainty still more desperate ; and, unawares to herself, it is likely that Ellen may have



dreamt a romantic dream—not of a union with Walton, but for two severed hearts living for ever apart, yet living true to each other, unwooing and unwedding elsewhere. We love the memories of our loves, even when we cease to love the objects of them ; how fondly, then, must we treasure such memories, when the objects continue to be loved—continue to be regarded with a passionate affection,—subdued, it is true, by a sense of duty, and religion,—still as strong as the purity and truthfulness of a young and ardent nature can make it ! She suffered—and her aunt (now almost entirely confined to her room from the increasing ailments of age and infirmity) saw that she suffered. But time passed ; and though the rose did at last wax fainter on the cheek of Ellen, and the smile was seldomer seen on her lips, none guessed the cause. She was

still the same gentle, obliging, and industrious girl she had ever been ; never unoccupied, for she knew the salutary power which occupation exerts over the busy-thoughted mind ; and the additional avocations, which the failing faculties of Mrs. Ellis compelled her to exercise, were of use in weaning her from contemplations, the indulgence of which could not be otherwise than hurtful.

But misfortunes, not the less trying that they were wholly unexpected, fell upon them. The banker, in whose hands the money was deposited from which Widow Ellis drew her small income, suddenly became bankrupt, and decamped, leaving many destitute. Mrs. Ellis had now only her scholars, and the little dress-making work, which had been Ellen's business to look to, as a means of livelihood. Her own health no longer

enabled her to attend to the former, so that the duties of the school also devolved entirely upon her niece. Neighbours and employers were, however, kind ; and such kindness grew more needful as time passed by.

Mr. Bligh had meanwhile returned to Combe Wood, a married man ; but had been two years a widower ere Ellen and he met. When they *did* meet, there was no symptom of recognition to excite apprehension of further persecution ; and, although he bore no favourable character in the neighbourhood, nothing so unequivocally bad as to render him more than an unpopular man was known ; so that the events of former years were almost forgotten at the cottage, when an incident occurred to recall them.

Ellen had seen her aunt to bed, one summer's evening ; and at her earnest desire,

sallied out to take a short ramble. It was one of those beautiful evenings in June when the sultry heat of the day, yielding to the approaching coolness of night, leaves, as it were, an atmosphere of repose over creation. Shunning the common tracks about the hamlet, near which stood the cottage, Ellen pursued a path that led over some waste land to the Hurst road ; and, worn out as she felt by the exertions and confinement of the day, she experienced the soothing influence of the exercise, the solitude, the universal quiet, while her heart bounded with almost the buoyant enjoyment of youth, as she passed along scenes that, ten years before, had beheld her a gay and happy girl of sixteen. The birds were fluttering home to their nests ; the bats were flitting about on their quest ; gnats were humming in the air, and that air was en-

riched by the breath of a furze copse near the pathway, whose every bush was laden with blossoms, from the golden mouths of which issued a steam of fragrance, rare and delicious. The petals of the purple vetch were folded up in sleep, but from the wild thyme, that clustered thick around, a few sated bees lazily rose at the light pressure of her foot; and, coming to a little wood of birch and hazel, that divided her from the highway—not twenty yards from that spot where first she met the distant Walton, whose image even then was near to fancy's eye—she seated herself on a grassy hillock, and flung off her bonnet, the better to catch the cool summer air that wandered by, refreshing and delighting her with its freight of fragrant odours.

Her thoughts were busy with the past; but a blameless life and a well-regulated

mind had taught her that we should not send out the dove of Remembrance from the ark of Thought to bring back cypress and yew ; and there were gentle and cheerful images floating over the tenderness that filled her eyes with quiet tears. We ought not to turn to the past as to a barren waste, but as to a field, where, though the reapers may have left it, having gathered their harvests, the gleaners may still collect a sufficing aftermath of rich ears, sweet herbs, and new buds. And thus wisely did Ellen ponder on times that could not be recalled, prayerfully considering "each misery she had missed as a new mercy."\*

Suddenly a rustling of the leaves in the coppice behind her, and then a harsh, whis-

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\* Izaak Walton.

pering voice, startled her from her abstraction.

"Be off with you, Judith!" it said ;  
"bide me at the Black Hill, and in half an hour I'll bring you a full purse. I watched him as he left the inn, and when I begged for a penny, he scowled on me with his eyes and cursed me with his tongue. I'll have my payment for it, if I be hanged for taking it. Off with you."

Breathless with terror, Ellen listened. She turned her head, but the bushes grew thick between her and the road, and she saw nothing ; though from the proximity of the sound, she knew that the voice proceeded from that part where the highway, leading beneath a slight acclivity, wound round the plantation. Scarcely knowing the ground she had for her fears, she was about to fly ; but then the whispered menace struck upon her memory, and with that unselfishness

which was her strongest characteristic, she reflected on the possibility of averting evil or baffling crime. To show herself, to argue with, no doubt, a desperate villain, would be madness ; there were no houses nearer than the dwelling of Mr. Bligh, and as she was endeavouring in vain to summon her powers of thought as counsellors in a dilemma so perilous, the quick trot of an approaching steed, struck upon her ear.

Springing upon her feet noiselessly, she crept through the underwood to the road, and reached a point whence her knowledge of the locality had assured her she could watch the coming stranger and his foe. As she gained the last belt of bushes which, fringing the summit of the acclivity, overlooked the road from Hurst, she perceived a short, stout, ferocious-looking man, in the ragged dress of a sailor, steal down to the



highway, where he placed himself behind a slight projection of the bank, so as to come entirely within the scope of Ellen's vision, while he was hid from the sight of the rider, who advanced at a good pace. The sailor—if such he were—had no weapon in his hand, and she was rejoicing in the belief that he was unarmed, when her eye caught sight of a huge bludgeon at her feet. It was his; for at that instant, evidently missing it, he turned round, as if looking for it, though without perceiving her as she crouched among the hazels; whilst at the same time the sharp click of a pistol smote appallingly upon her ear. Her blood curdled, her whole frame seemed turned to ice, as the unconscious horseman drew near; and in another moment he was under the bank, not four yards beneath where she stood.

A strong and rude hand was on the horse's bridle, making the animal rear and tremble with the sudden fear of the nervous grasp ; a rough voice demanded the rider's "purse or life !"—and at the same instant she beheld a pistol in the hand of the assailant, while the horseman in vain endeavoured to spur on the startled steed.

"Yield your money at once ; or, by the Lord, you are a dead man !"

"Never, villain !"

"Then may you be cursed eternally !"

And the pistol was glittering in the air, when Ellen—scarcely knowing what she did—raised the unwieldy bludgeon from her feet, and flung it with all her force at the robber, uttering a piercing scream. The random blow, directed by a providential power, struck the pistol, which was harmlessly discharged as it dropped from the hand

of the astonished miscreant, who—terrified by the suddenness of the rescue and conceiving himself surrounded by numbers—took to flight ; while the horse, affrighted by the report of the pistol, galloped madly off, throwing his rider beneath the bank. In another moment, careless of consequences so she could be of use, and even emboldened by her own daring, Ellen stooped over the prostrate man. It was Mr. Bligh !

It was not immediately that he recognized in his deliverer from probable assassination the form of Ellen Malden, for the severe pain of a dislocated shoulder made him so sick at heart that he closed his eyes ; but the touching tones of a pitying voice recalled him to a sense of his situation, and with a strange feeling of shame and gratitude, he leaned upon her arm, as she helped to raise him from the ground. At that

moment a good spirit entered into his breast, and he formed the resolution of making that woman his wife, whom many years ago, he had in vain tempted to become his mistress. Advancing steps suggested the probability of the ruffian's return ; but before Ellen's apprehensions found vent in speech, they were relieved by the approach of several men, returning from work on Mr. Bligh's grounds, and to them he related what had happened ; sending one of them to Hurst for a surgeon, while two others accompanied Ellen to the cottage, and a couple more assisted him to Combe Wood.

With expressions of grateful admiration, so warm as to revive fears that had been long dormant in her breast, he parted from Ellen, who reached the cottage without interruption ; but reached it to undergo a shock that almost overwhelmed her already

over-wrought faculties. Her aunt, speechless and apparently unconscious of any surrounding object, lay stretched on the bed, her eyes glazed, her limbs lifeless with the chill of paralysis. It was fortunate for Ellen that she had been attended home by worthy John Brown and his son, for at that moment she felt that to have found herself quite alone, would have almost maddened her. The father spoke words of comfort as he helped her to strike a light, and Ned was dispatched to the nearest cottage, whence two of her pupils, well-grown and useful girls, were with ready kindness sent to her ; while honest Ned ran on to Combe Wood to request that Dr. Renshaw would call at Widow Ellis's before he returned to Hurst.

Dr. Renshaw's opinion was that sensibility might return for a time, but that perfect recovery was hopeless ; though immediate

death was not be apprehended : and the result justified his opinion. In a few days the widow regained speech and reason, but her limbs were as dead. Day after day witnessed the arrival at the cottage of some fresh comfort, whether of food, medicine, or other kindness, sent by Mr. Bligh ; whose respectable old housekeeper frequently came to inquire after the cottagers, by the express desire of her master ; and, at the end of a month, Mr. Bligh himself called, requesting to speak apart with Miss Malden, and at once made an offer of his hand and fortune. Now was Ellen's triumph complete, but she felt not the triumph. Her mind, pre-occupied by her aunt's dangerous situation, her heart filled with an absent object, her whole thoughts averse to a change of condition, she gently but firmly rejected Mr. Bligh's addresses.

But he was not to be thus discouraged. Wanting that refinement of feeling which shrinks from bestowing attentions that are obviously unwelcome, he continued daily to call ; and it was a new grief to Ellen that Mrs. Ellis appeared willing to forward his views. The good woman was prepared for death, and contented to die, so that the future fate of her darling was ensured from destitution. She permitted her sick-bed to be disturbed by terrors for the desolate condition of Ellen, and she would have rejoiced in beholding her united to Mr. Bligh, whose late conduct had gone far in effacing from her recollection his former delinquency. We almost fear to think that the worthy old woman's grief was not very severe, when soon afterwards the heart of Ellen was sorely tried by hearing of the death of Major Walton in India ! The whole neighbourhood

seemed to enter with kindly sympathy into the sorrow of the aged and bereaved parents of the deceased, now left childless ; and Ellen, in the utter privacy of her unshared grief, felt that indifference, which is the most enduring proof of a cureless sorrow, steal over her heart, barring it against earth and all its concerns. She could have borne to hear of Walton's marriage, so that happiness had attended his wedded lot ; but to die thus, afar from his home, his family—the thought drew bitter tears from her eyes ; and as day after day, week after week, continued to drag slowly on, whilst no change occurred to vary her lot, she felt her energies, her strength gradually give way to a despondency against which she vainly struggled, Four long months had thus passed, nor had the attentions of Mr. Bligh ceased to annoy her. At last, shaken by the mournful



entreaties of her dying aunt, weakened by her failing health, and worn-out spirits, the desolate Ellen gave an unwilling consent ; and, at the bedside of the rejoicing sufferer, she became the wedded wife of Mr. Bligh !

The Widow Ellis lived not to witness the wretchedness she had entailed on her darling.

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There are stages in the heart's misery of such surpassing dreariness, that madness itself would be welcomed as a boon ! As the sod closed over the grave of her aunt, Ellen felt that on earth she had no friend ; and in the agony of the moment, unlike herself, she dared to forget that in Heaven—to which alone she should have looked—reigned an UNDYING ONE, who is ever able and

willing to protect those who humbly and confidently seek to lean upon His arm !

Mr. Bligh, given up to every species of low vice, was a harsh and exacting husband ; and although from the very moment she consented to become his, she formed the resolution, from which she never flinched, to fulfil the duties of a wife, in their very fullest sense, with unswerving, unmurmuring strictness, she soon found that neither her submissive meekness, her earnest endeavours to *seem* (if not to *be*) cheerful, nor her lady-like deportment at the head of an establishment of which each member loved to obey her, could check his evil propensities, or change a radically bad disposition. The first ardour of his passion for her over, he permitted his sensual nature to revel in the grossest debauchery ; and before the end of the second year of her marriage, Ellen found

herself in a position that moved the compassionating admiration, not only of the neighbourhood, but of her meanest dependent.

Some conduct, highly ungentlemanly, on the part of Mr. Bligh, occurred about this time to exclude him from the society of the neighbouring gentry ; and though Ellen retained the good opinion of all, she was of course compelled to renounce all companionship with that circle from which her husband was exiled. This coldness towards him he made the pretext for throwing open his doors to a set of dissipated and unprincipled men ...of whom there are always enow to be found ready and willing to sit at the rich man's table, be his vices what they may. But Mr. Bligh's affairs, from constant neglect and the most lavish expenditure, were becoming involved to an alarming extent,

and ruin stared him in the face ; when, Ellen, one day, perceiving that he was partially recovered from a fit of intoxication into which, for the preceding week, he had been plunged, fell on her knees before him, and besought him with tears to alter a course of life so full of sin, of discredit, of destruction. She implored him, at once and decidedly to cast from him the parasite brood whose precept and example had led, or upheld him in evil courses—many of whom, seeing that difficulties were gathering round him, had already begun to treat him with scorn and neglect : she entreated him to place his property and affairs in the hands of an honest man of business ; and to spare her...his wife...the mother of his unborn babe...the disgraceful horrors that menaced his vices with the severest punishment.

A dreadful frown, a frightful imprecation,

and an unmanly blow, stupified the soul and stunned the senses of his wretched wife. Cruel as his conduct had lately been, he had never laid the cowardly hand of violence on her ; and the stroke which prostrated her senseless at his feet, and which caused her to give birth to a dead child, struck more deeply on her soul than it wounded the tortured body. The dread of having killed her, added to that scarcely pitiable despair which so frequently follows a fit of inebriety, evolved the germs of insanity lurking in the mind of Mr. Bligh ; but it was not until a month after her recovery from the brink of the grave, that the benevolent Dr. Renshaw told her she was a widow. The unfortunate master of Combe Wood had rushed unsummoned into the presence of his God, and was found suspended from a beam in an out-

house, on the day after his cruel treatment of his wife !

The following weeks were full of painful excitement to Ellen ; but in Mr. Ryder, a worthy and clever man of business, and in the clergyman of Hurst and his family, she found kind friends, from whose counsel and society she obtained that upholding consolation which she so much needed. Mr. Bligh's affairs were discovered to be in such confusion as to render the sale of the whole property necessary ; nor did more than a small annuity remain for his widow, who retired to a neat little cottage at Hurst, near the parsonage ; where the family of the clergyman became her true and kind friends.

It was a singular chance that, soon after, made her acquainted with the aged mother of Burnett Walton. Mr. Walton's death had

quickly followed the accounts of his son's decease ; and his widow, bereft of husband and child, led a lonely but useful life, at Walton Manor, within a mile of Hurst. Of a high and noble-minded race, Mrs. Walton was constitutionally shy and reserved ; but sorrow, religion, and the genial nature of a heart originally kind, had humbled much of that pride which was hers by birthright ; but which true piety, as well as true wisdom, discards as the most unseemly and worthless excrescence that can deform the human mind. Her beneficence to the poor was marked and judicious ; and it was one morning, whilst Ellen was walking on the road that led to the Manor, that a fresh instance of the good lady's charitable nature brought her into contact with Mrs. Bligh. Turning an abrupt corner of the road as it wound round a hill, Ellen came suddenly upon a

group of three wretched objects. A woman, so worn, so wasted as to seem almost a phantom from the grave, was extended at the roadside, whilst two wailing children, the eldest not four years old, scarcely covered, from the nipping air of March, by a few nauseous rags, lay behind her. An elderly lady, seemingly in great pain, sat on a stone near them ; whilst her exclamations of anguish were from time to time mingled with words of comfort, and assurances of speedy assistance, to the greater sufferers beside her. Ellen instantly recognised Mrs. Walton ; and, springing forward, offered the aid which she saw was necessary.

“ Thank you, dear madam,” said Mrs. Walton, “ thank you ! if my pain would permit me I would tell you how glad I am to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Bligh, even *thus*. I have sprained my ankle—



badly, I fear. Forgetting how unbecoming it is for an old woman like me to skip over brooks, I too hastily stepped across this little ford, in order to enquire into the necessities of these poor creatures, and fell. I came out alone, and will indeed thankfully accept your offers. I cannot even stand ; but the lodge is not a quarter of a mile hence ; and, if you will have the kindness to extend your walk so far, you will find people there who will send my little pony-chaise for me."

Ellen flew rather than ran ; and before many minutes were past, the venerable lady of the Manor had given orders that every attention should be paid to the destitute woman and her children ; whilst she herself conveyed home in her pony-chaise, was extended on a sofa in her own room, with Ellen—  
—from whom she would take no refusal—

sitting by her, until the arrival of Dr. Renshaw was announced. From that day arose an intimacy between the two widows, which speedily ripened into sincere friendship, and was fraught with pleasantness to both parties. Ellen found in Mrs. Walton a refinement, a sensibility, a taste for literature, congenial to her own mind, but which she had never before encountered ; whilst the old lady soon learned to love and appreciate Mrs. Bligh with a partiality almost maternal. It was on one of those occasions, when the heart opens like a flower to the sunshine, that Mrs. Walton confided to her astonished listener her full cognizance of all that had occurred between her deceased son and Ellen.

“ My noble boy,” she said, kissing away the tears elicited by her narrative, as they trickled down the pale cheeks of her guest,

—“after he left England, had no secrets from his mother; and he then told me how bravely—*bravely*, my dear child!—you had acted; and how unalterably his heart still clung to you. I—proud, foolish old woman that I was! I rejoiced in your separation—not knowing the full value of the heart that had so nobly withstood temptation, until your conduct as Mr. Bligh’s wife became the subject of general commendation. Alas! would to Heaven that my precious Burnett had lived to make you indeed my daughter!”

Ellen wept on the shoulder of her venerable friend for a long time before she ventured to inquire whether Major Walton had not been betrothed to a lady abroad, some time before he died.

“Never!” cried Mrs. Walton, emphati-

cally. "Such was indeed reported, but we cared not to refute it. Of his death we know little. In an action, which ended fatally for the British interests, he fell covered with wounds—but his body was never found!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Ellen, "may he not still live?"

"No!" sighed the mother; "it is impossible. Such as were taken prisoners by the barbarous natives were said to have perished by cruel tortures, and the few that escaped had seen nothing of him. Nearly three years have passed since.—No! he is dead!"

"Merciful Heaven!" shrieked Ellen, as starting to her feet, she pointed towards the large oriel window near which they sat;—"behold his spirit!"

The aged Mrs. Walton, terrified by the

scream, the action, and the words of Ellen, caught the fainting form of her guest in her arms in time to prevent her from falling on the floor, and violently rang the bell. Assistance speedily came, and then it was that the old lady discerned symptoms of agitation on the countenances of her faithful housekeeper and butler. Ellen's senses were soon recalled ; but it was not before due precautions had been taken by the affectionate vassals, that either Mrs. Walton, or her guest, was informed that a stranger awaited their welcome—a stranger—no spectre, but Burnett Walton himself, alive and well !

What needs it to recount his release from captivity, and his return to his native land before even the accounts he had despatched home of his miraculous escape had reached

England ! What needs it to say more than that a happier mother than Mrs. Walton, as she saw her brave Burnett place the wedding-ring on the finger of Ellen Malden, smiled not in all merry England !

CHAPTER III.

TIME FLIES.—THE MADRAS CLUB HOUSE.—THE  
MEDICAL STUDENT'S STORY OF A SUBJECT.—  
THE BLEEDING HAND.

I LEFT Vellore ! Years passed, and I was at the Madras Club House, preparing for a final return to England in bad health. Here I first met with a young medical officer, who had just come from England, licensed and diplo-

ma'd to practise all sorts of surgical experiments on the servants, white and black, of the Honourable Company. Uhland (for such was his name) was by parentage a German, and partook of many of the characteristics of that nation. He was an honest, generous fellow, straightforward and blunt...yet possessing imaginative faculties incompatible with that common straightforwardness which sees nothing in a clod *but* a clod...nothing in a flower *but* a flower. He was strangely given to metaphysical discussion ; and being myself more ready to listen than argue—to doubt in silence, or believe as undemonstratively—I had wont to give him my attention during periods when something—I know not what...drew us together, until I was often spelled, as it were, by his singular ideas of “ things ” *not* “ in general ; ” but concerning which we are too frequently led to rum-



inate with scepticism, or discuss with flippancy. At times he left me in a state of the most complete stupefaction ; for when he soared, as he was not seldom inclined to do, into such cloudy sublimities as fatigued my feeble wings to follow, I had nothing else to do than to remain quiescent. At other times, he would discourse so agreeably upon such matters as came within the limits of my comprehension, that I could have chosen no more favourite companion for an evening's chat. Among other topics, he chose, one evening, a subject which is common enough to suit all hearers...the influence of dreams on the body. Our table was shared by two other officers...a friend of mine and a shipmate of his. The former affirmed that the only influence which dreams could have on the body must proceed from their primary impression on the mind ; while the latter

fully believed that in a dreaming state the mind became precognizant of dangers, or pleasures, in prospect. After some useless discussion, Uhland, referring to his German birth, said he would read to us a narrative, written by his brother who was one of the parties concerned in the curious incidents related in it, which would afford a singular instance of the effects of a dream on the action of the will and body.

“ We Germans,” said he, “ are accounted credulous in what appertains to mysterious influences ; but every word of the anecdote I refer to is true : nor are even the names counterfeit. My brother is ten years my senior, and a steady old file as ever smoked a meerschaum over a winter fire.” We earnestly requested that he would instantly fulfil his promise, when retiring for a few

moments to his room, he returned and read what he called—

### THE BLEEDING HAND.

SOME years ago, there was a young student in the College of Anatomy at Leipsic, who was remarkable for his intense application to and predilection for the study of surgery. Ulric Von Oran—for such was his name—was indeed the inheritor of an ardour in the pursuit of professional knowledge so enthusiastic, as to enable him to surmount difficulties and perplexities that would have discouraged a less resolute spirit. He was not a native of that city, and little more of him was known than that he was reputed to be of ignoble parentage, and that his pecuniary circumstances were so closely allied to poverty as to render the practice of that

profession, which was to him a passion, an absolute essential. That he was a gentleman by education, his highly accomplished mind and polished bearing amply testified. Though precluded by necessity from acquiring a footing in that society whence his supposed low birth excluded him, but to which he would, nevertheless, have been an ornament, he shunned companionship with all excepting the few of his own sex and profession from whose scientific attainments and intellectual superiority he hoped to derive benefit. In his slight intercourse with his brother-students, and with the few patients in the higher circles to whom his skill, and the high opinion of his professional superiors, had been the means of introducing him, he had the good fortune and rare merit of rendering himself esteemed and loved; and there were not many of

those who had seen him more than once, that did not take an interest in the fate of a being so highly gifted, yet the history of whom was so closely enveloped in obscurity as to impart an air of truth to the various and contradictory reports of his origin and early life—reports which, in all probability, had their rise in that perverted disposition to pry into the affairs of their neighbours which is inherent in the idle and malicious.

He had been several years at Leipsic when his recognized ability gained him the situation of assistant practitioner in that college where he had so long been a student ; and it was shortly after the assumption of his new office that accident made him acquainted with the richest, the proudest, and most disagreeable man in Leipsic. The Baron de Rosenthal was disliked by everybody that knew him : he had in truth but

one merit, and that was his opulence ; and

“ Gold, the old man’s sword,”

was to him the watchword that rallied round him a crowd of factitious friends...for but *one* real friend possessed he in all the world, and of that one he was unworthy, for to *her*—to Alethea, his only child, he was a harsh and exacting parent.

Alethea di Rosenthal was one of nature’s fairest creations—not less amiable in disposition than cultivated in intellect and beautiful in person. Her susceptible, heart so long a stranger to the enchantments of a courteous and gentle manner, soon learnt to prize too tenderly for its own peace the man whose skill had rescued her father from a painful death. Ulric Von Oran’s heart might have been compared to a fountain

whose source had been choked up by neglect and disuse, but which, cleared of the rubbish that checked its currents, resumes its original flow of strength and freshness. Circumstances of a singularly sombre complexion had intervened to check and chill the natural tenderness of his spirit ; but the time was come when its course was no longer to be arrested ; and the long suppressed feelings of his soul now gushed forth in all the beautiful vigour of their original freshness, to do homage to one object, and that object was the daughter of De Rosenthal.

Alas ! what a deceiver is love, and how artfully does it effect its mastery over the strongest and sternest mind ! Could Ulric have pondered for a single moment on the dangerous deviousness of the track that lay before him, reason might have taught him

that to love Alethea de Rosenthal was desperate fatuity. *He*, the poor unknown practitioner of an ill-paid art, with a blot upon his name and a cloud upon his birth ; *she*, the courted heiress of thousands, the offspring of Leipzig's most arrogant noble. But what has Reason to do with Love ? The coward retreats at the first sight of the Boy-god's quiver !

They loved ! This pair, between whom rank and custom had planted such barriers, loved as if to love were all that the world had for them to do ; and their brief dream of delight was only terminated by the discovery that each was dearer to the other than life itself : nor was the discovery fated to rest with them. We have described De Rosenthal as unamiable, proud, avaricious ; the selfishness of his nature had caused him for a time to forget that his able medical at-



tendant was almost the constant companion of his child ; he experienced a sort of liking for him, as his preserver from a lingering and, probably, fatal disorder ; and as his professional skill was still necessary, he treated him with unwonted kindness and uniform civility : but, had the idea crossed him of the probable existence of an attachment between *his* daughter and Ulric, he could with his own hand have slain them at once, rather than that the high race of Rosenthal should suffer contamination from a connexion so ignoble.

Alethea was resting on the bosom of her lover, and listening to such words as but too often pave the way to a world of wretchedness, when the Baron burst in upon them, like a raving lunatic. Ulric received a violent blow. He was a tall muscular youth, who could have easily whirled the feeble, abusive

old man who had assailed him, to the other end of the room ; but that abusive old man was the father of his beloved. He did nothing, then, but defend himself from further manual assault by wresting from the enraged Baron the instrument with which he had attacked him. He could not, however, protect his ears from being wounded by the volley of coarse opprobrium which was levelled against him : he heard himself stigmatised as ungrateful, a villain, a bastard, till the words tingled through his brain like a flood of poison ; and it was then, for the first time, that the relative positions, in which he and the being whom he adored stood towards each other, rushed in upon his mind with a violence that rooted him in almost guiltlike consciousness to the ground : a pang of the bitterest self-accusation darted through his breast, as casting one impassioned look of

love and agony on the insensible form of Alethea, he fled from the house.

For many days Ulric Von Oran lay upon his bed in a strong fever. His senses had wandered, and it was not until the twentieth day after the scene which has just been detailed took place, that he recovered to a recollection of it. He found himself attended by two friends, who, to his questions regarding himself, merely replied that he had been delirious for some days, and his life despaired of. He dared not ask for the Rosenthals—they were in fact unknown to his friends; and his mental misery was augmented by his utter ignorance of what had befallen her whom he so hopelessly, so madly loved. A few days saw him up again, but Von Oran was an altered man: a deep gloom was spread over his fine features—his studies, his avocations, his apparel, were neglected;

and the sudden change in his conduct and appearance inspired his comrades and acquaintances with astonishment and curiosity. At length, to Albert Uhland—his true and sympathising friend—all was revealed—and the imparting of his grief, if it did not lessen it, soothed it. Daily, now, did he regain strength, and he began once more to enter upon his duties ; but the life, the vigour, the ardour with which he had been wont to pursue his tasks, were no longer observable ; and more than once, when engaged in the Hall of Anatomy, and appealed to upon professional points, his answers were remarked to be vague, and singularly at variance with his usual lucid and shrewd mode of explanation, or argument.

He was one evening sitting in his little apartment—one of the chambers in the college—consulting a new treatise on surgery ;

and as he listlessly turned over the leaves, a casual observer might have deemed from the manner in which he lingered over each page, that his whole thoughts were employed upon it. There was a flush upon his cheek, and occasionally his eyes lit up with somewhat of their former fire ; but his lately favourite study soon ceased to interest him, and closing the tome, he turned once more to the gloomy volume within his mind, and occupied his thoughts in maturing a scheme by which he might obtain intelligence of Alethea. At that moment the door was opened ; and the lecturer of the week entered.

“Up Von Oran !” he cried ; “do not give way to these *triste* humours, which are either the result of your recent illness, or of some private sorrow—the nature of which you have not chosen to impart to your friends ; but which, as your own good sense will tell

you, is not to be removed by pondering over it. What, Ulric, would become of the cockatrice's egg if the sullen toad refused to brood over it? Why, it would addle harmlessly, nor hatch fresh mischief! Psha, man! never frown; you know I love you. This cloud will pass away, depend upon it. You shall spend this evening with me; there will be none of the conviviais—there will be only your friends—Gellert, with his face full of glee and his heart full of good-fellowship, and Albert Uhland, with his quiet, kind philosophy. Besides, we have been promised a—now listen, Von, Oran!—*a most in-to-resting* SUBJECT!” balancing the words, as he spoke, and uttering the last with an emphasis to which the capitals of our printer can barely do justice. He perceived, however, that the attention of his auditor was arrested. “Ah, now, you prick up your ears with some

of your old *slashing* enthusiasm," resumed he. "To-morrow, by break of day, be in my private dissection-room, beneath this dormitory of your's, you know. The *subject* is the body of a young damsel—sudden death—strange case—and all that sort of thing! Probably one of Jan Speers' sweethearts, for that man would sell his own mother's carcase! After all, Jan Speers, one eye, one leg, and *no* heart, is the only man in Leipsic who can nab the defunct with any spirit. Come along!"

And Ulric accompanied the hospitable lecturer to his apartments. The party only consisted of those he had named; they were Von Oran's favourite associates, and he was welcomed by them with a cordiality that made his heart throb quicker; while the delicacy which refrained from all allusion to his late estrangement was a

kindness the most touching and soothing to a mind like his. There were choice viands, cool and exquisite liquors, kind words, and intellectual conversation. The influence of such over the most wretched has been owned ; nor was Von Oran proof against the attentions of his friends ; his frame, enfeebled by illness and disenergized by distress, yielded gradually to the excitement produced by such stimulants as kindness, wine, and cheerful society. Noisy merriment, frivolous talk, or ribald carousal would have startled and disgusted him,—but there was none of these. The night waned, but it still found them conversing over the wine-flask. Ulric's despondency had long given place to tranquil enjoyment—tranquility became cheerfulness, and cheerfulness waxed anon into gaiety. When the party broke up, it was with the



determination of meeting in a few hours, at day-break, in the dissection-room alluded to by the lecturer. Ulric's head throbbed feverishly—his steps were unsteady—and, for the first time in his life, his intellects were under the influence of the rosy god.

He fell asleep the instant he got into bed ; but an incubus sate upon his breast, and wild terrific dreams distracted his slumbers. Suddenly he thought that he found himself in the dissection-room of the lecturer, beside the "*interesting subject*," which had been the last topic of discourse ere he parted with Uhland, Gellert, and Werner their entertainer, a few hours before. He thought that he was quite alone ; and inspired with a vehement desire to commence the anatomy of the body before the arrival of his friends, he collected the necessary apparatus, and ad-

vanced to the table on which it lay prepared for inspection. Withdrawing the sheet that covered it, he was astonished to perceive the body of an old man, instead of that which he had been led to expect; he looked around, but there was no other subject in the chamber, and advancing closely to the body, he started to behold that it was the Baron de Rosenthal who lay dead and ghastly before him !

As he gazed in wonder upon the corpse, he imagined that he perceived a sneer of contempt distort the countenance of the deceased. The recollection of the bitter taunts which had been levelled at him by the Baron, inspired him with a momentary but uncontrollable feeling of hatred, and he plunged the amputating-knife into the side of the body ! suddenly he thought a shriek rang through the apartment—the livid

corpse heaved convulsively—and stretching forth its shrivelled hands, clutched him by the hair as he bent his head over it! With the wrench of violent terror, the dreamer imagined that he released himself from the grasp of the dead,—and, seizing the hand which had held him, with one movement of his knife he severed it from the wrist of the corpse, and rushed out of the chamber! Panting with his exertions, his body still bedewed with the cold sweat of horror, Ulric awoke!

The lamp was still flickering beside his couch, and the gray dawn which began to break though his casement, shed a ghastly light over the room. He started up, and blushing deeply, with a sense of shame to which he had hitherto been a stranger, at finding he had retired to bed without divesting himself of any other part of his dress

than his watch, he put his hand under the pillow where he usually placed it, in search of it. A cold and clammy substance met his grasp ; his heart, he knew not why thrilled as he drew back his arm—Good God ! his fingers were covered with blood !

With a strong sensation of apprehension, and disgust, he flung aside the pillow, and beheld—a *Human Hand* !—the small, delicate, exquisitely beautiful hand of a woman, severed at the wrist, and dripping with gore !\*

He shrieked aloud...such a shriek as a man

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\* I know that my knowing young friends of Bartholomew's and King's College will bring serious, if not *serous* objections to the gore dripping from a subject ; but they must overlook the poetical licenses of ignorance ; if indeed the subject was not recalled to life by the act of the somnambule.

seldom utters unless he be a maniac...but he was no maniac ; there was but one hand on earth like that—he knew it instantly. He sprang from the spot—he flew to the dissection-room ; the pass-key, which had been consigned to his pocket the preceding night, was in the lock. Had *he* been there ? He entered—the apartment was tenantless of the living, but there was an uncovered body on the table !

It was the corse of Alethea de Rosenthal ! Pure, white, cold, beautiful, she lay like a sleeping saint whom sin had never tempted, sorrow never more could pain. Beside her was an amputating-knife, and one of her small, delicate, exquisitely beautiful hands was missing !

Ulric Von Oran was found lying senseless on the floor, with the *bleeding hand* beside him !

On his recovery from an illness of many months, he left Leipsic, where he was never again heard of. There is no doubt of his having proceeded in his sleep to the dissection room, where he must have severed from the body of her whom he loved that hand which had so frequently been clasped in his own, living, loving, and warm. Of Alethea's death little need be said. An illness, chiefly caused by the severe treatment of her inhuman father, and neglected at the commencement, released her pure spirit from the endurance of earthly sorrows, and the sorrows of earthly love!

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“It is a shocking incident,” said Macdonald, a stalwart youth from the Hebrides; “and I begin to think that there really *are*

such things as our philosophy cannot scan. Nature is full of mysterious influences ; and an obstinate scepticism is more often the accompaniment of ignorance than the attendant of wisdom."

"I do not hope," cried I, "to be able to add materially to Uhland's exposition of the theory of dreams, but I will read to you an account of an adventure I once had, and which embraces a dream of my own. I have prepared it for an English periodical conducted by a friend of mine, to whom I mean to give it on my arrival in London."

"After which, perhaps, I can tell you an anecdote, not generally known about the celebrated Rob Roy's son, James Mac Gregor," said Macdonald ; "it was related to me just before I left home by one of the most able, high-minded, high-hearted, yet gentle and generous literary ladies in the world ;

and, strange to say, though an octogenarian, as young in eyes and intellect as though she were only eighteen—Mrs. Grant of Duthil, author of “Popular Models!”

I smiled a proud, quiet smile ; for the beloved old lady was my true and tried friend.

So I began the narrative which forms the contents of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER IV.

## A NIGHT IN THE JUNGLE.

IF I had occasion to apply to fiction for an adventure worthy of relation, I should scarcely venture to choose Asiatic ground for the scene of action. Morier, I. B. Fraser, and my talented clansman, the Forest Ranger, have exhausted the treasures of the East ; nor could any mosaic imitation of their

genuine gold be palatable to modern readers ...one and all as familiar with the Peris, Afrits, and Ghouls of Oriental superstition as with the interjectional ejaculations to be met with in every page descriptive of East Indian dialogue. The *bismillahs*, *mashallahs*, and *istukfuroollahs*, of Persian and Mahomedan colloquy are as common in the mouths of Young England as is the *argot* of the *Tapis franc* school of literature, of which Eugene Sue is the Grand Master, to his Anglican imitators. In my search for a subject for a sketch, I must therefore fall back upon a simple fact; and have only to dip into my diary for the year 18——, to find that on the 19th of October, being then *en route* from Nagpore to Madras, and some hundreds of miles from both these places, the following adventure befel me; in which the reader will find that, without having re-

course to *les lieux communs* of Deo, or Jin, tiger or mad elephant, I received as keen a shock of the nervous system as any young soldier in search of the shocking need desire.

I was travelling alone ; by which I do not mean to say that I was unattended, but unaccompanied by any of my own standing or colour. I had the usual number of retainers apportioned to marching subalterns, namely a Doobash, Maty, Chowkra, Syce, Ghanswalla, Bilewalla, Kulassi, and a couple of Coolies. Now, as each individual of the above, with one or two exceptions, possessed a wife or more a-piece, parents, or children more or less, I could scarcely boast of being a solitary wanderer in the wilderness. In the light literature of the day, the judicious application of foreign phrases and exotic words is supposed to throw a rare glory over

otherwise *fâde* passages ; the critical reader will, therefore, please to observe that I have used eight East Indian terms in the last paragraph, which would not have read or looked half as well had I merely written them down in plain English, thus :—Head servant, or butler ; servant-of-all-work ; page ; groom ; grass-cutter (always in waiting on the groom), bullock-driver, lascar, and porters. Nevertheless, I do not translate these words because I see any necessity for so doing, but with a natural desire to prove my right to use a language, my understanding of which might otherwise be as questionable as are a certain titled author's claims to the honour of having composed the novels to which he prefixes his name as author.

It was after a long ride of some sixteen miles, that I reached the town of Meeranpore, in the territories of His Highness the Nizam,

at the somewhat late hour of ten in the morning ; for travellers in India, unless under peculiar circumstances, seldom journey under a hot sun ; and, unless when travelling *dák*—post—in a palanquin, or compelled to limit their daily stages to twelve or fourteen miles—in order to admit of their being accompanied by servants and baggage ; the latter invariably carried on bullocks, or in *bandies*—waggons—drawn by bullocks. The day was close and sultry, yet not bright ; for the Monsoon began to send forth notices of its approach in the shape of dun, massive clouds, and dreary gusts of wind, rising and falling with equal suddenness. While my tent was being pitched, I threw myself beneath a mango tree ;—after indulging in a refreshing draught of the newly-drawn juice of a wild date tree which grew near, and under whose manifold branches drooped

numerous tiny earthen pots, or *chatties*, placed there by the Tari-drawers, to receive the luscious beverage, which is called *Tari*—a term vulgarized by *nous autre Anglais* into toddy\*—I soon fell asleep, nor awoke until, uttered by my head-servant, the words—“*Saman sub à gya, sahib, aur nashta tyar hie*—the baggage has all come up, sir, and breakfast is ready,”—aroused me to feel the wants of a hot tea breakfast, and a cold water bath.

“Where is Omar?” said I, as finishing a hearty meal, appetized by early rising and exercise, I prepared to undress, while huge jars of water were piled beside me in the

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\* Strictly speaking, *Tari* is only the juice of the cocoa tree—that of the date is called *Sendhi*.

outer tent, wherewithal to administer to myself a shower bath.

“Sahib,” answered the servant (and to spare myself the trouble of repetition I shall omit the worthy Lallah’s vernacular), “he has not yet arrived. The maty left him in order to proceed on with the baggage, and he said he would follow at his leisure, as he meant to gather some wild plants in the jungle, which he knew you wished to possess. But he should have been here long ago ; he must have gone astray.”

I was not at all astonished, for Omar was often late, being a zealous collector of plants for his master’s *hortus siccus* ; nor did any apprehensions of danger render me uneasy, in case he should have taken a wrong path. Such mistakes are of frequent occurrence in a country where roads are none of the best ; and we were still some

distance from the Honorable Company's districts, where they are of a more creditable nature. Omar Ali was my *chokra*, (page if you will) though the word means nothing more than boy. He had been several years in my service, having been in a manner confided to me by his father, a venerable sepoy belonging to my regiment, who dying wifeless, and without other offspring or relations, besought me in his last moments to be kind to his darling child, then an urchin of ten years of age. Omar was now sixteen, and the beau ideal of a high caste Mussulman youth, for his father was a Syed. Tall for his age, yet strongly and elegantly formed, his countenance was beautiful as a spirit's of his own creed's paradise ; his skin was of that rich, sunny, brown, and fine creamy texture, which we so seldom see *out* of a picture—with eyes dark as night,



yet fuller than a starry night of all bright thoughtfulnesses ; features that were perfect, yet not inexpressive, as such features frequently are ; and hair that flowed in a thousand natural curls of silken darkness from beneath his turban. He looked—what he in truth was—a creature of fine thoughts and rare endowments. Omar was very handsome, yet more amiable than handsome ; and was not only my friend and favourite, but the pet of the whole regiment—never in his buoyant playfulness of youth forgetting for a single moment our relative positions, as patron and page, by the very smallest solecism in graceful good manners. He was a scholar, too, for I had seen to his education ; and, knowing his master's love of traditionary lore, he had amassed and could repeat a rare collection of Hindustani poetry. Very dear to me, in sooth, was

Omar, and very anxious I became, as hour after hour passed without bringing him. I at last sent messengers to Jumkeera, the place where we had halted over-night ; and getting over the heat of mid-day by the usual simple process of reclining on a mat, almost undrest, a punka, and a goblet of tamarindade by my side, with a novel in my hand, awaited their return with irrepressible impatience. A light tiffin was brought, and sent away almost untouched ; and about five o'clock, just as a grey cool haze began to creep over the heated atmosphere, the Potal, or head magistrate of the town, made his appearance ; adding most painfully to my anxiety by suggesting a horrible idea that had never once entered my head.

“ The Phansigars have been in the neighbourhood, sahib.”

“ The Phansigars ?—the Thugs ?”

“ Yes, my lord ! Had the boy property about him ?”

A cold shudder came over me, for I knew that Omar Ali was richly drest, with not only the gold and silver ornaments with which the young handsome Mahomedan loves to adorn himself, but with many precious stones that had come into his possession on his father's death.

“ Good God !” exclaimed I, “ they would not harm that beauteous child !”

“ What is beauty, or youth, or virtue, to the cupidity of such *haramzadas* ?” asked the Potail. “ They would strangle the Prophet himself for his toe-ring.”

I inquired if there had been any recent victims to the Thuggee system.

“ Yes, Khoodawund ; our goldsmith was discovered a week ago at the bottom of his

own garden, with the mark of the noose fresh about his neck, but with no life in his body. Near him was a hole, in which he had evidently been hiding jewels or money when he was destroyed, for a few coins and pearls were strewed among the earth."

"And what is to be done?"

"The *thanadar*—head of the native police—has been informed of your servant's absence, and peons have been dispatched to the most suspicious parts of the adjoining jungles."

I had nothing to do for it but submit to circumstances ; and unable to remain still, I set off at a quick pace on the road to Jumeera, in the hopes of encountering some of the messengers who had been sent thither. Plunged in thoughts of absorbing gloom, I walked on and on, nor thought of returning until all at once I remarked that the brief

and sudden twilight of Hindostan had overtaken me. I instantly turned back, but had not gone far before it became densely dark ; and in some doubt as to the road, I paused ere I ascended a rising-ground which I did not recollect having passed. With imprecations on my own heedlessness, I determined to wait until the first deep obscurity of the night should melt away, as it generally does ; and in about half an hour I had the pleasure of beholding a few stars rush out into the sky, anon followed by the moon. I then ascended the hill, but had not proceeded far ere I felt convinced that I had taken the wrong path—for presently the ruins of a large building loomed in sight ; and, advancing towards it, I found it to have been a Choultry, or Caravanserai, on an extensive scale, but now seemingly abandoned to desolation and decay.

As I leant against one of the pillars, in earnest yet useless quarrel with myself for involving myself in a dilemma that *was* disagreeable and *might* be dangerous, I almost resolved to remain there till dawn, or a chance passenger, should bring light, or information, to direct my steps. A flock of evil surmises crowded into my mind. The Thugs were about—I remembered my adventure with the Fakeer—and though I was not ignorant that they seldom, or never, meddled with Europeans, I also knew that there were freebooters in the lawless territories of the Nizam who would not stand on such trifles as cast or colour ;—and might there not be tigers and panthers in the jungle that thickly skirted the Choultry on all sides ? As I afterwards learnt, there were neither ; but at the moment I knew not this ; and from time to time fancied I heard them

growl in the fastness of the woods. But a real discomfort soon arose to dispense imaginary evils : the wind, moaning fitfully, blew almost damply on me, as I watched the large masses of clouds, which kept ever and anon creeping between me and the moon's light ; presently leaves and dust came whirling against me from the forest, and the low twittering of the birds was turned to harsher and louder notes. I could detect the scream of the parroquet, the snap of the rice-bird's bill, and the guttural cry of the heron ; while the agitated movements of the feathered tribe hinted loudly of internal derangement in their *leafhold* economy. More than once a jackal flitted before the Choultry...yelling, as it retreated to the jungle ; while from some near but invisible *jheel*, or mere, arose the discordant croak of a myriad of bullfrogs...so loud as to fill the

whole air with the singular thunder of its undescribable sound...a sound fit to terrify a new comer, unaware of the harmless nature of the gigantic reptile that occasions it. A storm was coming on ; and presently, attended by low, grumbling thunder heralding its sister-element, flashed the vivid lightning ; and then, in the air, a sort of universal whisper hissed about—and anon, down... down poured the flood-like rain...the passionate deluge of the first shower of the monsoon ! Who that has been in India can ever forget the first time it has been witnessed by him ?

I was glad to withdraw into the interior of the Choultry, at the risk of falling over disjointed stones ; for the darkness of the place proved the security of the roof,—and though the cold wind reached me, I was safe from the rain. Stumbling against the wall,



I found a stone-bench which ran round it ; and sitting down, overcome with fatigue, sank into a slumber. I knew not, however, that I slept, for it seemed to me that wearied by vain endeavours to sleep and finding the shower at an end, I hastened from the choultry, and pursuing the broadest track, followed it until I found myself at the bottom of a *dongor*, or deep narrow ravine—the early light of day shining in a dancing brook which ran through it. As I stooped down to quench my thirst, I became aware of the proximity of human beings—for, from behind a rock, which excluded us from each other's view, came the whispering voices of several men. A fear of I knew not what, such as, it is to be hoped soldiers only feel in dreams, stole over me, as I bent to listen.

Thou wilt never make a *sirdar*—chief—

among us, Samee, if thou forgettest to bring the *Kodali*—pickaxe; thou must take lessons from Govindoo, too, ere thou throw'st the noose again. The boy struggled hard, and hadst thou not knocked him on the pate, I doubt whether he would not have escaped from the *roomal*—handkerchief."

"Tush! what is the use of talking? tell not the chief, Soorun, of my awkwardness, and thou shalt have the *angotha*—ring, on which the *Ingrezi*—English—characters are traced."

I heard no more, for, with these words, a stupor came over my senses, deafening me to every other sound than that of my heart's voice, which uttered the name of Omar—*Omar*—OMAR! To that poor murdered boy I had given, not long before, a ring of British workmanship, with the words—"From a Friend"—cut within its rim.

Suddenly, I recovered myself sufficiently to listen again. A noise, as of the piling together of stones, was heard—and by and bye the speakers retired, their voices sounding at each step more distant. I started from my hiding-place, and rushing to the other side of the rock, found a huddled up mass of stones, beneath which, I doubted not, they had buried the body of their victim. With that desire to know the worst which inspirits to exertion, I set to work to displace the concealing rubbish ; nor was it long ere first a white garment, and next a red turban, and then the cold wan flesh of a human corse, met my sight ! Alas ! I saw him—*him*—OMAR ! Yes, it was he himself—the eyes glaring from strangulation—the mouth open—the neck chafed

and discoloured—the sweet life utterly gone!

\* \* \* \* \*

A cold sweat bathed my limbs as I awoke from a dream of horror to a palpable, tangible peril! As I opened my eyes, I saw, by the faint dawnlight which entered through the broken columns of the ruined edifice, that beside me—standing erect upon its coiled extremities, and with its hideous head vibrating almost in contact with my face, which was turned towards it,—glared with its demon eyes full upon me an enormous cobra di capello, or hooded snake!

Fortunately for me, fear had, for once, a contrary effect to what it usually produces; the signal peril of my situation struck me into monumental inaction—and, instead of

giving voice or motion to my horror, paralysed my senses into preservative stillness. As I continued to gaze at the venomous reptile—now dancing and swaying to and fro before me, and anon jerking up its dilated head over my face, until its foetid breath penetrated my very marrow—I discovered with a thrill of hope that its eyes were fixed—not upon me, as I had at first conjectured, but upon some indefinite object beyond me. I knew not how far along the wall the stone bench, on which I reclined, extended—but my hope lay in the possibility of some outlet, or hole, beyond where I was lying; and fearful lest the keensighted creature should detect my agonized stare, I shut my eyes, and tried to pray!

Presently I could hear a rustling, fluttering noise in the wall beyond me, and before I had time to question its cause, there was

a spring—a leap—and the cold clammy folds of the serpent were trailing on my face and over it ;—and up, away, beyond me, there was the shrill cry of bird or bat—a loud hiss—and the crunch of bones and sinews !

I was saved ! and in another moment I was out in the open air, panting on the wet ground, to which I had fallen in the strengthless helplessness that succeeds an escaped peril. The morning was cool, and the first wild burst of the monsoon had subsided into a thick misty drizzle. I endeavoured to retrace my steps, and soon succeeded in regaining the path I had left to ascend the misleading height. Stiff from the cold, and sick at heart from a sensation to which I can give no truer name than *fright*, I had not walked a couple of miles before I was forced to sit down. Great,

then, was my joy to perceive advancing towards me on my old bay steed my head servant, attended by a couple of peons. Loud was his rejoicing, and sincere was mine ; but, as assisted to the saddle, I began to relate my terrible adventure and the still more terrifying dream which had preceded it, the reader may conceive my delight to hear that the page, my good and gentle Omar, was---not well--but safe ; and had never been endangered by Thug or tiger---Phansigar or panther ! It seems that stumbling in the dusky morning over a tree-root, he had so severely sprained his ankle as to render motion impossible ; nor was it in less than an hour that he succeeded in attracting attention. He was then led to the doorga, or shrine, of a religious man, who kindly and carefully bound up his foot, applying some lotion to it.

Here, late in the afternoon, he was found by our messengers, who, procuring a *doly* ---litter---for him, had him conveyed to my tent, where the utmost confusion prevailed. During the whole night not one of my attendants had slept, and all were here and there in search of me, when chance led Lallah into the very track they had previously searched in vain.

I had before, and have since, passed nights in the jungle ; but never one that showed me so visibly the human FEAR---which is life's apanage---sitting and shivering at my cold heart's core. Of poor Omar Ali, of our joyous meeting, I say nothing. That boy---no longer a boy---is a fine and gallant native officer—respected by all who know him.



## CHAPTER IV.

COOL CONVERSATION IN HOT HOURS.—THE  
SUNIASSIE.

NEED the reader be told, that the heat of our English dog-days is but iced lightning to our Madras midsummers? Need the reader be told how very a sybarite, man—be he military, clerical, or of the laity,—becometh under the prostrating influence of

intense heat and incessant perspiration  
How he findeth no comfort in common  
chairs ; how he escheweth all movement ap-  
proaching to the manual or pedal exigencies  
required by the simple process of walking  
across a room ; how that to lounge on a  
mat-spread couch—a divan, not soft and  
warm, but hard and cool, with a *punkah*  
pulled daintily over his head, brewing up an  
artificial Zephyr—is to him a *far niente*  
state of existence, not merely desirable but  
absolutely necessary, during the six hot  
hours of the day...yea, necessary as his  
“ *pain quotidien* ?” I had been lying on my  
cot, in all sorts of attitudes, and stript to  
my *kumecs* and *paijamas* (shirt and long-  
drawers), for at least three hours...dreaming  
a wide-awake dream of houris bringing me  
unattainable and cooling sherbets, when  
Uhland and three others entered my room,

which adjoined their separate apartments in the dormitories of the Club House. I will not describe their costume, having already done so by describing my own, which was infinitely more cool and agreeable than picturesque or decorous. I expressly observe that the word "*decorous*" is used here as it would be used by the conventicle moralists of Great Britain ; were they to see to what strange contempt of personal clothing East Indian heat reduces their friends in the Colonies. For, strictly speaking, there was nothing approximating to indecency in our dress ; but in England decorum is a conventionalism ; and the words morality and decency are so frequently used and bandied about, that there seems some chance of our ending by having nothing *but* the words :—"*vox et præterea nihil.*"

"Macdonnel is sorry he cannot join us,"

said Uhland ; " he is ordered off to Palaveram forthwith, and is busy. You lazy dog, you have been fast asleep for the last two hours, I warrant."

" Not a wink—only dreaming."

" Of the ball to-night, no doubt," cried Uhland.

" *I go to a ball !*" exclaimed I, with irrepressible astonishment ; " and at *this* season !"

" Oh !" said Burnett, " I think I begin to feel the sea breeze, and we shall have a charming evening. All the last ship's load of spinsters are to be trotted out, and old Colonel Hanley has betted that he marries one of them before the monsoon sets in."

" Ah ! 'tis very well to marry during the ~~birsd~~...rains ; but in such weather as this nothing that is not salamandrine could stand connubial fervencies."

"For my part," said Conway, "I should order the bride to be properly iced, as well as the bride-cake and champagne. I have drank six bottles of soda water to-day to cool me, and all in vain."

"What have *you* been doing, Singleton?" asked I, addressing a young griffin who had not yet cut his ensign's teeth.

"I have been sitting for the last hour over a tub of water, and devouring mangoes."

"Bravo! no griffinish way of feeding on these globes of nectar; in fact, the *only* manner in which a mango should be eaten, to enjoy it cleanly."

"I hope," said Conway, who had stretched himself down on a leopard's skin, while Umland divided with him the voluptuous artificial breezes created by an immense *viscary*... a sort of fan, or hand-punkah, made of the

scented *cuscus* grass and sprinkled with water..." I hope Mrs. Ashton won't wear her inevitable ponceau dress, which makes one feverish to look at; or scent herself with that insufferable *mârechale*:" and he heaved a deep sigh, as if the safety of the East India Company depended on the colour of Mrs. Ashton's dress, and the aroma of her perfume.

"Better *mârechale*, or even the coconut oil with which Mrs. Piper anoints her *rabid* hair, than Miss Faulkner's nefarious breath; which is good for nothing that I know of unless it be to kill mosquitoes," said I.

"I thought you were a lady's man, Campbell," said Conway.

"Why?"

"You write poetry, or what passes for poetry in the Colonies; you have a great

many flowers stuck about your rooms ; and I rather think that I saw a ring on your finger with the name of '*Emily*' upon it."

I was silent, for the name of Emily conjured up strange and gloomy memories.

"You *are* a lady's man, since you do not deny it."

"Oh !" answered I, "I am like the man in one Goldoni's comedies, who could not utter a negative :—'*Non so dir di no—non son capace di dir di no—e non diro mai di no !*'"

"What are you two laughing at?" demanded Singleton, turning to Conway and Uhland. Burnett was fast asleep on two bullock-trunks in a corner.

"At the idea of Campbell's being a lady's man, with his nervous trepidation,

his *gaucherie*, his blushes as red as his hair, and——”

“Short sight!” interrupted I, anxious to break in upon the category of my incompetencies to play a part in public society. Alas! there is no catholicon for abyness; and so I must endeavour to make the world ascribe to modesty what is only *mauvais-honte*.

“What the deuce is that?” said Singleton; “I really thought it was a tiger.”

It was only Burnett, who in the *extase* of some sinister dream—excited by the peculiar perplexity of his position—suddenly struck out his dexter leg with such force, that his foot coming in contract with a huge chatty of water, shivered the earthen vessel, and sent its contents to disperse in various ramifications through the chamber.

“Oh! those diabolical bullock-trunks!”



sighed Burnett, as we sat laughing at his bewildered looks. "I dreamt a dream more horrible than any which Fuseli's pork chops raw with blood sauce, could have produced. I fancied Mrs. Dickson was trying to force the roasted leg of my grandmother down my throat, and in my effort to kick aside the baleful condiment, lo ! what a deluge I have created !"

"Come ; read us another story, Rob !" said Uhland. "Macdonnel cannot fulfil his promise, so you must substitute something to repay us for accommodating you with our company."

"Very well !—here are some choice guavas, try them ; be good boys, and listen ; or sleep, but do not snore, for I shall tell you my wonderful adventure with—

## THE SUNIASSIE.\*

ONE of the most extensive provinces in the Deccan, as that portion of India is termed which is situated between the rivers Nerbudda and Kistna, is the Goundwana...a wild, mountainous, and unhealthy district, though the care and culture of the few Mah-ratta families from Nagpore, that are found in certain parts, have rendered them fertile and productive. The general aspect of the country, however, is unfavourable; and, where occupied by the native Goands, almost an entire sheet of jungle. This wretched tribe, perhaps the very lowest in the scale of

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\* This sketch has already appeared in "Fraser's Magazine."

all the natives of India, though Hindoos of the Brahminical caste, profess peculiarities that are at variance with the tenents of Brahma ; permitting themselves the indulgence of animal food, abstaining only from that of the cow. For many years the tradition, popular among the natives of Lower India, that among the Goands there were certain sects that offered annual human sacrifices to the destroyer, was ridiculed by the European community ; but later investigations, and the testimony of an intelligent and enquiring officer—Captain Crawford of Bengal—whose intimate knowledge of the habits and customs of the East has seldom been exceeded, have proved beyond all doubt the prevalence of this revolting practice. It was in the year 1819 that a singular chance, or rather a series of rare events, confirmed my own belief in the existence of a crime,

which was then darkly hinted at, but which was only credited by the sepoys and natives of Madras.

The regiment to which I was at that period attached was *en route* from Bangalore in Mysore, to Chanda in Berar...a distance of no less than six hundred miles ; when one morning, after reaching our encampment for the day, I sallied out into the jungle with a brother officer, whose fowling-piece made frequent and welcome additions to our commonplace marching-fare. Calvert Montford was a gay-hearted, handsome, generous fellow ; the favorite of the whole corps, from the bluff old commandant to Meer Ali, the fogle-man ; though, in truth he was apt, in the exuberant hilarity of youth, to commit vexatious solecisms in the serious matter of military etiquette. Our kind, but somewhat stern, commanding

officer, Major Beckett, was frequently obliged to check, with a severity that was sometimes half assumed, the heedless gamesomeness which so often led Montford into dilemmas, that by compromising the credit of the corps, might have provoked graver censure if subjected to the pitiless analysis of higher authorities. Not that a single grain of vicious or dishonorable feeling could be sifted by even malevolence from the volatile matter which formed the faults of my friend; but he was ever and anon offending the gravity of official ceremony—insulting, out of mere schoolboy fun, the prejudices of the native population—and erring against the common discipline of the service. Complaints were constantly being brought against him by the inhabitants of the towns and villages through which he passed; now the house of a surly Mahomedan had been

forcibly entered ..now a sacred pigeon had been shot at while roosting on the very pinnacle of a pagoda...yesterday half a dozen palmyra trees had been pilfered of their tari-pots \* — and to-day some indefinite offence had been offered to the idol of Vishnoo itself ;—while once upon a time he was likely to have fared still worse for having dared to pursue one of the Dancing-girls belonging to the temple into the very precincts of that prohibited edifice.

But to proceed.---We had traversed a considerable quantity of ground with various success ; a few hares and green pigeons had been fagged and confided to the care of

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\* The pot, suspended from the cocoa nut, palmyra and date-trees, to receive the sap, or vinous juice, for which at certain seasons they are pierced.

Calvert's *koottay-walla* (dog-keeper), and the day was beginning to heaten into true Oriental fervour; we were on our return, when we came unexpectedly upon an old grey pagoda in ruins, and so completely hugged in by trees that we saw it not till we were close upon it. A sharp bark from Calvert's dog attracted our attention towards it, and running round the corner of the building, we beheld a large brown monkey—squatted on an arch of the temple, and indulging in a series of facial contortions. Montford raised his gun.

“*Mut maro, sahib!*” (do not fire, sir), cried the dog-boy, in evident alarm: “it is a sacred monkey, and the Brahmins will be exasperated.”

But scarcely had the warning passed his lips ere Calvert fired, and down at his feet fell the poor animal, quite dead.

At the same moment, forth from the dismantled pagoda there rushed a being of so appalling, so spectral an appearance, that had it not been familiar to us, we might have questioned its claims to humanity. But, for the ten days before, the Suniassie, who now leaped forwards uttering the most frightful yells and imprecations, had followed our camp. I have since then frequently lamented that the art of the painter was not mine, for the whole scene would have made a striking picture. The Suniassie was a gaunt, muscular man in the decline of life ; wrapped in a scanty, but close-fitting tunic of many-coloured patchwork, which extended scarcely to his knees, leaving his nether limbs entirely naked, his long grizzled hair fell down his shoulders to the waist ; from which, tied by a girdle of rope, depended a gourd to hold the alms which he



might receive from the charitable, while in his hand he carried a bunch of peacock feathers. His face was smeared with white ashes, and his natural ugliness was increased by the deformity of a nose which had been slit—whether in penance, or a punishment for some offence, is unknown.

Pointing to the still quivering body of the monkey, he poured forth the grossest revilings of which the Hindoostani language is capable (and there is no dialect that contains more), against the English in general, and my friend in particular. Flinging his arms up to the sky, he called down curses upon the destroyer of the monkey, which made the dog-boy cower in very terror; and while we stood gazing in silence, as we might have done at a play, he sprang suddenly towards the shrine—lifted a stone—dipped it in the blood of the animal, and

ere we could fathom his intent, flung it with all his force at the head of Calvert. It struck him on the temple, and he fell, stupified for the moment, but not materially injured. In my indignation I darted towards the Suniassie, but ere I could reach him, he plunged amid the ruins of the pagoda, and in another moment was seen high up on the crumbling parapet; whence, shouting the words, "*Dawa Dawa!*" (revenge! revenge!) he disappeared.

The revengeful nature of the Hindoo religious mendicant is well known; but though frequently displayed in the upper provinces of India, is seldom outwardly expressed nearer to the seat of government. Of these hypocritical and bigotted beggars there are four sects—consisting of the Gosains, or Suniassies, who are followers of Siva; the Byragies, disciples of Vishnu;

Udassies, attached to the Seik creed ; and Jogies, who are distinguished from the others by the burial instead of the burning of their dead. The Suniassie, who is the unworthy hero of my present sketch, had appeared suddenly in our camp, where he was an object of fear to the generality of our sepoyas, who were neither allied to him by country or connexion, for he was a native of Bengal. More than once he had interfered in disputes with which he had nothing in common ; and had been ordered from the camp in consequence of his insolent and malignantly expressed detestation of the English.

Meanwhile Calvert Montford recovered to feel little ill effects from a blow, which had been too slight to cause other results than a headache and a bruise ; but as he had so often incurred the reprimands of his superiors for offending the superstitions of the

natives, the death of the monkey and its attendant punishment were concealed from Major Beckett until after many days, when, having seen nothing more of the Suniassie, the whole matter was freely talked over at the mess-table. A general laugh was raised at the expense of Montford by the juniors, but there were others who expressed astonishment that no complaint had been made about the destruction of the sacred monkey, while the disappearance of the mendicant served equally to puzzle all.

"I am glad he is no longer with us," said the Major; "but, young man, should you meet him again, excite not his ire; he is a dangerous playfellow, and it is seldom that such creatures forego their purposes of vengeance."

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We had been about nine months at Chanda—a dreary city, some eighty miles south of Nagpore, surrounded by woods which were infested by tigers, and in the *malaïa* fastnesses of which—bidding defiance to malaria and fever-mist—Montford found frequent relief from the ennui which is almost sure to assail the tedious hours of an inert military life. Chanda, with its ruinous ramparts, six miles in circumference—its heterogeneous population of Mahomedans, Mahrattas, and Brahmins of all denominations—contained no Europeans but the officers of our own regiment, and at that period we had not a married man amongst us; so that the charms of female society being denied us, alack for him who found not in his gun, or his book, his pen or his pencil, that relaxation which in stations less

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newly-roused kine, the crowing of cocks, and the tinkling bells of a flock of sheep, I was surprised by the appearance of a *doly*, or litter—such as is used by the better class of Mofussil (up-country) natives—which, attended by a horseman, was fording the stream in front of my tent.

“*Dekho, jee !*” cried a sepoy near me,—  
“*Montford sahib ata hie doly kee sungat !*  
—Look, sir, Mr. Montford is coming, in company with a litter.” In another moment we were shaking hands, while my eyes were asking a hundred questions about the *doly* before my tongue had uttered one. But I will pass over the unlading of the sweet freight which that vehicle bore and the arrangements made for its comfortable accommodation, proceeding to give my friend’s narrative in, as nearly as possible, his own words.

“ After I left you I had a glorious week’s sport before I reached Dewelmarry ; where, in my perambulations, I learnt that further on, at Bustar, the Goands were at such hot feudwith each, othet that it would be folly to visit the place. I liked the neighbourhood of Dewelmarry ; but fate would have it that, in spite of all my resolutions, I should be enticed some twenty miles nearer Bustar than I intended. Jan Homed (the sepoy before alluded to) is a fine intelligent fellow and by him I was informed that he had “ made *dowsty* ”—formed friendship—with an old Puthan in the town, whose only child—a young and lovely girl—had lately been dragged from their cottage during his temporary absence : the only person who was with her at the time being a decrepid old woman, their servant. That plunder



was not the object of her abductors was evident, for nothing was touched in house or garden; and the old woman, who had fainted in her terror, could only recollect that among the party who tore the poor girl from her arms, there was one in the garb of a common Hindoo beggar. Interested by Jan Homed's recital, at my desire he introduced me to his new acquaintance. He was a fine venerable old chief on the verge of eighty; and, in answer to my queries, declared that he was convinced that his daughter—his sweet Azeeza—had been carried off by the Bustar Goands for their annual human sacrifice.

“ ‘ I dare not utter such words aloud, maharajah,’ said he, ‘ for there is neither law nor learning, faith nor fidelity, in this idolatrous country of Satan; but this

atrocious custom prevails here as surely as Mahomed is the prophet of Allah! Everyone knows, though none dare say, that the Gosains and Jogies of Bustar offer a human being in annual sacrifice to the goddess Kali; and of all others they prefer one who does not belong to their own accursed creed!

Horror-struck, I asked him if he had no friends in authority—no kindred from whom to demand counsel in such a strait?

“ ‘None, sahib,’ he answered; ‘nor is there any course to pursue but to sit silently on the musnud of submission, and weep over the invisible ashes of my lost child. I have no relative here, and had gone to make arrangements at Chanda for a removal thither, when the rose of my life was taken from my *goolshan*—flower-bed—by those infidel dogs. May their graves be defiled!’

“ ‘ But can nothing be done to save her !’ cried I, indignant at his passive submission to what he called destiny.

“ ‘ Alla Kereem ! God is merciful, but what can I do ?’ was the reply. ‘ The sacrifice always takes place at the new moon—in three days I shall be childless.’

“ ‘ Nay,’ returned I, ‘ lead me to the suspected spot ; provide me and my attendant with such disguises as you may consider most likely to favour such an enterprize, and let me try what can be done.’

“ The aged Mussulman clutched at the unexpected hope which my words conveyed, with a desperate joy ; but Jan Homed, knowing my rashness and alarmed for the consequences of such an undertaking, endeavoured to reason us out of it. But the strong desire I had to fathom the whole affair, to satisfy my doubts regarding the

mystery of human sacrifices, and to restore a child to her father's arms, stimulated me to higher purposes ; and, for once in my life, I resolved on adopting as my coadjutors Caution and Prudence, two assistants in the pursuit of adventure which the boldest man may wisely enlist. Suffice it to say that the venerable Puthan, Ameer Khan, myself, and Jan Homed, reached a public choultry in the dense woods that surround Bustar, on the very day before the new moon. We were disguised as soldiers of the Nizam, and it was not long ere we discovered the principal pagoda of the place, which was situated in a thick grove of banyan, peepul, and date trees. Ameer Khan felt assured that the interior of this temple was the place allotted for the sacrifice ; nor was it with any difficulty we learned, by mingling with the crowds that attended a

howt (fair) in the town, that a great festival was to be solemnized at midnight in the pagoda.

“Constructed with a power of resistance that would have repelled an army, the temple was to us a destruction of almost all hope. What then could *we* do? Nothing! But fortune, chance, *Providence* did all! I had left the old Puthan sitting in despair beneath a Goollar tree—(wild fig), near which Jan Homed was cooking an extempore curry, and as the twilight began to creep greyly over the earth, sauntered around the pagoda. As I stooped to cull a wild flower that sprang from a heap of stones, a large snake, alarmed at my approach, issued from behind the tuft of lemon-grass that covered the rubbish, and directing its progress towards the wall of the sacred edifice, entered a fissure, where it disap-

peared. What induced me to pursue it I know not, for I have an unconquerable terror of serpents, but I did so ; and, with my stick, strove to guage the depths of the aperture—which was larger than I at first apprehended. The stick struck against some substance which emitted a metallic sound, and on approaching closer to examine it, I found that there was a small wicket deeply buried in the stonework of the wall. I could perceive that with slight toil the mortar and rubbish, which now almost curtained it from sight, might be cleared away ; and this effected, I had not a doubt but that an entrance to some part of the pagoda could be obtained. I flew, rather than ran, to the goollar tree, and related my discovery ; nor lost we a moment before we acted upon it with the

expedition and resolution that are sometimes engendered by despair.

“ There was not a creature in sight, as, with our weapons hidden beneath our robes, and a torch in case of need, we reached the spot. We soon got rid of the lime and clay that jammed up the wicket—which, when wrenched open, admitted us to a small vaulted cell. A glimmering light, shining through a crevice in one corner, warned us of more habitable places in our vicinity ; and as Ameer Khan, who had advanced towards it, stooped down and looked through it, he saw that which proved too great a trial for his shattered nerves, for with a groan that terrified us for the results, he fainted. I whispered Jan Homed to remove him into the open air, and there detain him till I gave a certain signal. No sooner had they left me than I applied my eye to the

aperture, and beheld the most lovely creature I ever looked upon. A young and graceful girl, whose beauty shone in the glare of many torches stuck round the walls of an immense cavernous hall, lay bound hand and foot on a mat !

“ In one corner was a huge image of Vishnu, at least eleven feet high, with the pyramidal cap, closed eyes, and canopy of seven hooded snakes, peculiar to that deity ; in another, with its sepulchral chaplet of skulls round the neck, was the hideous idol of Kali ; and in the centre of this large and, no doubt, interior chamber of the temple, a group of Brahmins—almost naked, with shaven heads and sacerdotal cords flung across their shoulders—Jogies, Suniasies, and grotesquely attired Udassies, were busily engaged in chaunting a lugubrious chorus around a blazing fire. I could not



hear a word that was uttered, though I could plainly distinguish the most remote nook ; but I cared not, even at that moment, to keep my eyes from that sweet and beautiful creature ; who lay, panting in her pallid fear, almost within reach of me. A heavy smell of frankincense, aloes, and benzoin, penetrated to where I knelt, and I felt that the moment was at hand when *she* was to be saved, or *I* was to perish !

“ Suddenly an overwhelming noise of gongs, kulera-horns, tom-toms, and bells, struck up outside the hall, and the whole mass of bigots withdrew. At that moment I could have willingly cut off my hand for admittance to that saloon of sacrifice ; but I saw no means of entering it. I ran round the little stifling vault that held me—I heard the hiss of the startled snake, yet paused not—I felt every crevice and cranny

with my fingers—and, at length, when in utter despair I was mad enough to dash my fist against the opposing wall,—a bolt, or a bar, or a secret spring, gave way,...and down I fell on my face, within three paces of the victim. For the first time I heard her voice...she uttered a faint shriek...but the continued din without, prevented its being heard. In five minutes she was freed from cord and chain...in five more she was in her father's arms...and ere half as many hours had passed we were on our way to Dewelmurry.

“ But we did not leave Dewelmurry next morning unnoted. Ameer Khan and Jan Homed were in advance of me as we left that town; and as the old chief had resolved on preceding us to Chanda, he was bidding his dear restored treasure farewell, when out from the jungle darted an odious-

looking creature, who giving one keen glance at the terrified Azeeza and a vengeful look at me, retreated to the woods, while the word 'Dawa!' yelled out, recalled a hated voice. It was no other than the Suniassie, —and Azeeza remembered him well, as being one of the foremost among her tormentors.

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Do we not sometimes, in our wanderings, fall upon certain spots which, without possessing any striking beauties of scenery, have yet a power of arresting the attention,—a fascination constrains us to linger there, nor seek for brighter vistas beyond? Do we not pause there, where the grass is of dearest Leigh Hunt's sort,—“*lie-down-uponable!*” where “the buttercups smear the land with

splendour ;" where there is a bird's song on a green bough, but no human voice ; a flower's breath, but nothing less sweet : do we not pause, and fear to go on, lest by losing these we lose all that is lovely ?— So it is with me in my tale. I care not to proceed. I care not to leave the short year of quiet, dreamy loveliness which rewarded Calvert Montford for his preservation of Azeeza's life by that most sweet creature's clinging affection ! I care not to overstep that tranquil space to recount, as I must now do, her worthy old father's death ; our subsequent march to Nagpore ; and at Nagpore the sudden illness, and—must I say, death of Montford ? So unexpectedly fell this stroke upon his gentle companion, that for several hours she could not credit that life was extinct ; and so quietly, after a heavy fit of agony, had the " life-want "

crept over him, even in her very arms, that the medical man at first supposed he had only fainted. But a day passed, and the preparations for burial—always and necessarily a matter of haste in India—were completed. Azeeza was led to her own range of apartments, whilst I saw him dressed for the grave; and helped to carry his corse, extended on the couch on which he had ceased to breathe, to a small bungalow which stood unoccupied at the bottom of the garden,—whence the funeral procession might pass, on the morrow, unnoted by the mourning Moossalmany. Early in the morning the coffin was to be brought; so, leaving the body in that lonely room, after lighting the lamps which hung round it, fastening the windows, and locking the door, we withdrew. I returned to the house, placed a guard of sepoy over the store-

rooms ; and, determining to pass part of the night in sealing up the letters and papers of my friend, which had been confided to me for that purpose, I called for lights, dismissed the servants, and seated myself in his room.

The casements were all thrown open to admit the cool air of evening, which, sweetened by the rich odours it had collected from a clump of henna\* close by, breathed refreshingly upon me. I was sorrowfully examining a sketch, the work of my friend, when a soft, stealthy footstep aroused me. I turned round and beheld Azeeza standing between me and the window ; the moonlight,

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\* The *Lawsonia inermis*, whose leaves contain the pink dye with which the Asiatic women tinge their nails.

which fell in silvery showers upon her person, giving her almost a spectral appearance. Her veil was flung back, and her hair—usually cared for with that classic taste which is evinced by most Mahomedan women of a certain rank in the arrangement of their tresses—was unbraided—falling in rich wild masses over her finely formed neck and shoulders.

“Friend of the dead one!” said she, in a low, calm voice, that yet sounded as if it were full of tears, “I must see *him* once more ere he is wedded to the worm!”

“Azeeza,” I cried, “you cannot mean it! You could not bear it!”

“Hush, hush, Sahib! you were his friend—you are mine; I am not a woman to quail at the sight of him, lifeless, whom I loved, living! Lead me to the dead, and leave me with it for one brief hour!”

“ I saw there was a fixedness of purpose in her that would admit of no denial ; nor, indeed, did I deem it kind to oppose her wishes : so, making her wrap a shawl around her, I led her unobserved to the bungalow, and, unlocking the door, left her with the dead, promising to return in an hour. The lights which burned in the death-chamber shone through the venetians as I passed ; and I would have looked within, but a feeling that told me it would be a sort of profanation, withheld me. As I sauntered round to the side of the building which was the remotest from the entrance, I came upon a little door which led to a bath-room attached to the bungalow, and which we had entirely overlooked. This bath-room opened into the corpse-chamber, and I now remembered that we had neglected to look into it, or fasten the door. Afraid of alarming the mourner



by the noise it might occasion, I refrained from examining the place until she had departed; and was moving away, when a sound of feet and the whispering of voices near me, on the other side of a thick and almost impassable hedge of aloes and cactus, which divided Montford's compound \* from a thicket of wild date trees, arrested my attention. I listened, and presently heard two voices, whilst I could understand that the owners of them were debating on the feasibility of overcoming the fence.

"By Nanuk Sha!" said one, whose exclamation proved him to be a Seik, "if you lead me into any accursed Feringhy (European) trouble, I'll brain you with my *chukkur*!"

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\* The space enclosing a mansion.

“Now I was aware that the chukkur was a sort of quoit, sharpened to the keenness of a razor, and employed as a missile in the warfare of the Seiks. To throw this disc, or quoit, with ease, precision, and *success*, is an accomplishment which they study and practice.

“Idiot !” answered the other, “they have abandoned their dead to the care of four walls and four lamps. If you now retract, the curse of Kali will blench your flesh with leprosy till you become as white as the *moorda* (corpse) of the Sahib. The holy unguent must be ready by the new moon, and within our reach is the only ingredient that is now wanting to make it fit for the purposes of the pagoda. My knife is keen, and you have but to remain silent whilst I repeat the *muntrum* (incantation), and to

hold the body while I cut the heart from its side."

"And the entrance?"

"Is through a bath-room, which must be close to us. Wrap the leather well about your legs and thighs, and mind not a few thorns."

"But," rejoined the first speaker, "the proverb says—' *Juhan khàr wuhan màr* :—Where there's a brake, there may be a snake!"

"*Bay-wukoof!*" (fool) "whilst you utter such loads of filth, I pant for the Feringhy's flesh. Twice he has foiled me, living—he shall not foil me, dead. *Dawa, Dawa!*"

And the last two muttered words betrayed the speaker. It was the Suniassie! But ere they had managed to penetrate one fourth of a high and thick barrier—spiky with frightful thorns—I had planned and

acted on my plans. I rushed to the door of the bungalow, gave a warning knock, and entered. Azeeza was rising from her knees ; I interrupted her as she was about to remonstrate against my quick return, and in a brief whisper explained the matter to her. With that mute masterdom over her feelings which only the strong-minded woman can command, she acted according to my wishes, without a word, I conducted her out, and in less space than it takes to tell it, I had placed six sepoy's behind the bungalow, ready at a moment to fall upon the intruders when my signal...a pistol fired off...should terrify them into flight from the death-chamber.

All was silent round the couch of the dead, as I entered the large empty room, in which, with the exception of an old palanquin and a chair, there was not an article

of furniture. Behind the palanquin, which stood opposite the bath-room, I contrived to crouch down ; and had barely done so, before, stealthily and softly, from the expected quarter, crept the squalid figures of the Suniassie and his accomplice. The eyes of my forbidding acquaintance glared like a tiger-cat's, as, with fiendish delight, they rested upon the lonely corpse of my friend ; and giving a quick, sharp glance round the apartment, he muttered :—

“ Udassie-jee, speak not ; but when I have recited the muntrum, seize the hound's body and hold it firmly.” Drawing a large knife, two-edged and bright of polish, from his vest, he knelt down, sprinkled some ashes taken from his gourd upon the floor, and commenced a sort of low chaunt, in a dialect to which I was a stranger.

Narrowly I watched his movements, in

readiness to discharge over his head the signal pistol, when...as he motioned his comrade to advance towards the body, and arose himself knife in hand to commence the sacrilegious deed...my arm, raised in act to fire, was suspended by a spectacle that for the moment made me doubt the evidence of my senses. Slowly...slowly...slowly, as one might do who arises unwillingly from a bed of rest, the corpse began to raise itself on the couch,...and, while the Suniasse, awed into motionlessness, stood before it, slowly...still slowly, but steadily, it attained a sitting-posture...its eyes wide open, and staring with glared eyeballs!

At that moment, overcome by wonder, perhaps by terror, I lost command of myself and discharged the pistol. There was a yell...a rush towards the bath-room...the

clash of arms...the sounds of conflict and seizure...and in my ears a soft, sweet voice, a woman's, and I became insensible. That soft, sweet voice, no longer full of tears, was in my ears when I awoke to consciousness ; and when it said, in gentle, happy accents,—“ *Ai, bhacchud mera !*—Oh, my brother-friend !—*jeeta kie !*...he is alive !” the whole truth flashed upon me. The whole truth ? Yes ! Calvert Montford lived ...he was restored from a death-like syncope to the arms of Azeeta ; and for the nature of the punishment that awaited the Suni-assies, I refer the inquisitive reader to the Orderly books of the 1st. of April, 1821, at Nagpore, in which he will find that they were provided for in a manner effectually to prevent them from assisting at any future human sacrifice, or from procuring unlawful ingredients for the composition of unguents dedicated to the Goddess Kali !

## CHAPTER V.

## A BRIDE IN THE JUNGLES.

PRETTY May Douglas ! How well do I remember the first time I saw her, when newly landed at Madras, in 1819, she came to make an exquisite addition to our then somewhat scantily supplied matrimonial mart ! Since then, the bridal bazaar has been overstocked with spinsters. The recent



retrenchments in civil stipends, as well as in such monetary matters as served to render military life more endurable in its exile, far from diminishing the number of enterprising fair ones who seek in the sunny and hospitable East that position which they may have vainly struggled for in the more fastidious West, seem to have inspired them with a desire to prove that motives of interest have had little to do with their exodus from their native soil. But at the period of which I write, not only had the recent Pindaree war caused a lack of officers, but the Presidency was singularly bare of those sweet flowers of home produce, whom, in defiance of all reasoning which the pyrrhonism of the unkind and the unmanly may produce upon the subject, I do not hesitate to denominate the best supports and surest purifiers of English society in the colonies.

At the first ball which was given at the Government House after the arrival of the eight hundred ton ship, Keolanthe, the whole fashionable world of Fort St. George; St. Thomè, and the Mount, had assembled to see the new arrivals ; amongst whom were one dozen of spinsters—from the boarding-school miss rising seventeen to the mature woman of seven and twenty—and twice as many cadets. Not one of that goodly twelve stood any chance against pretty May Douglas, though some of them were, in sooth, fair to look upon, and not one of them but showed some good point : yet, strange to say, when a year and a day had passed, pretty May Douglas, was the only one of the twelve who remained unmarried. Indeed, our fair heroine could scarcely be classed amongst the worshippers of wedlock who had visited the Orient for “ an esta-

blishment ;" for she was born there, her father being a highly respected clergyman at Madras, where he had now lived twenty years.

At an early age she had been sent to England, whither, some years afterwards, induced by ill health, her mother followed her, under whose judicious care she was reared, as few young ladies have the felicity to be reared...not only for show, but use ; that use which qualifies a woman to be the assistant, the companion, the cheerer of man, as well as his idol to worship or his pet to be proud of. Oh ! false is the reasoning and narrow the judgment that would limit the capabilities of a sex, whose physical delicacy argues no intellectual deficiency. Man is a creature of stronger thewes and sinews, but education makes of woman all that it makes of man ; or may mar her,...

as it too often does,...until to man's foibles are added the artifices imposed by restraint, and pseudosanctified by the false religion of custom.

May was eighteen when the first arrow of grief reached her heart, sent by the death of her mother. But the tears of youth, though sincere, are transitory ; and the necessity which, in the want of near relations, compelled her to return to her longing father's arms, led her buoyant and cheerful thoughts into a new channel, which carried away, on the mounting waters of Hope, the first tears of a genuine sorrow.

Pretty May Douglas ! When first I saw her, as, leaning on the arm of her venerable father, she entered the gorgeous saloon of Government House, dressed in a simple robe of white muslin unrelieved by any other ornament than a single rose in her bosom,

and a black lace scarf,...she yet drew all eyes from the other novelties, who in gayer and gaudier attire paraded before the wife-wanting *lions* of Madras. Her beauty, though striking, was yet less so than it was insinuating ; if indeed such an expression can be used where every feature and look beamed with truth and sincerity. She was very fair ; a skin of dazzling white seemed yet whiter for the sable scarf that touched her shoulders ; while her abundant hair... soft and silken...fell in golden masses around her. Her eyes were of that dark grey which, at times, assumes an almost violet hue, whilst her finely pencilled eyebrows were darker than her hair ; a well-shaped nose, and a mouth, which might have been called a thought too large but for its symmetry, its red-lipped, white-toothed beauty, and its dimpled smiles, completed the picture. Her

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form was slight, but elegant...showing no evidence of fragility : all was health, life, hope.

For the following six months Miss Douglas was the unrivalled belle of the Presidency, and had *juwabad*—*Anglicè*, answered,—i. e. rejected, Hymen and herself alone know how many suitors! Civilians, rolling in lucre and rotting in liver ; generals, yellow as the turmeric with which their diurnal mullagataway soup was flavoured ; nabobs from the opulent merchant whose skin had become parchment, and whose legs had dwindled to drumstick proportions, down to the ambitious cornet of cavalry, or humble ensign of foot ; who, forgetful of all but love and beauty, dared to announce his ardent passion for one who looked too gentle to frown, had received in turn the same courteous but positive denial. It was hinted

that even the commander-in-chief's aide-de-camp—a sprig of nobility with very red hair and very white hands—had shared the same negative; and though her worthy parent might have gloried, with a pardonable pride, to see a coronet on his child's handkerchiefs, he prized his treasure too fondly to urge her acceptance of even a titled hand, seeing that it was unwelcome.

A year, and she who had been so long the “observed of all observers,” after enacting the bridesmaid to her eleven shipmates, remained still...as far as the Madrassees could see...unfettered and heart-free. But a change came, as changes will come. Mr. Douglas's health began to give way; and with a prescience of that event which would leave his daughter without a protector, he candidly revealed his apprehensions and the wish he cherished to bestow her on some

worthy object before he left her alone in the world. With tears and blushes...roses amidst dew...but with the frank ingenuousness of her innocent nature, she then confessed that her heart had long been given to Eric Roslyn,...“though, in truth, she had scarcely missed it until others had sought to claim it.”

“And does he appreciate my child?” asked her father, kissing her.

“Oh, dear papa, he loves me only too well ; for years he has loved me, but I always laughed at him ; for indeed I knew not that I cared for him as I do, until these stupid fellows here pestered me with their nonsense.”

“Well, dearest,” said her father, with a happy smile, “Eric Roslyn is my sister’s son, and if he is worthy of you, all is well.



May it please Heaven to prolong my life until I resign you to his arms !”

“ What, papa, shall we return to Europe ?” asked May.

“ No, my child. Eric’s regiment is ordered to India. I received this letter from him to-day. Read it.”

And May obeyed him ; but as she read that letter, oh ! how deeply gushed the red rose-tints over brows and bosom ! and how sweet were the tears with which she returned it to her father, as she hid her bright young face in his encircling arms !

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When next I saw May Douglas, it was two hundred miles from Madras, at Banga-pore ; whither her father had been recommended to proceed for change of air ; and

where indeed his health improved so rapidly, that little seemed wanting to complete his daughter's happiness ; for more beautiful than ever she looked, and with a new and delightful expression in her sweet eyes, as they were upturned to the fine black ones which seemed to read in hers, thoughts which they only could comprehend. I found upon enquiry that the tall, manly young officer on whose arm she leaned, as they stood listening to a fine military band which was playing on the evening parade, was her cousin and affianced husband, Captain Roslyn, who had arrived but a few days before, and to whom she was to be united in another week ; after which she was to accompany him to Bellary, where his regiment was stationed.

I know not whether the fact is so generally understood as to render the repetition

of it superfluous, but it may be as well to mention that, in those days, marriages in India were the simplest and least obtrusive affairs in human life ;—as, methinks, they always should be. The solemnity inseparable from a rite which is so influential to the welfare, temporal and eternal, of two sentient beings, seems doubly sanctified by simplicity and seclusion. Now, in our Eastern colonies, no sooner does the ceremony take place than the married couple set off—generally attended only by domestics—for some remote village, some picturesque scene away from the station, cantonment or garrison, where a week is passed in complete retirement. In certain cases, where circumstances do not admit of exuberant expenditure, they simply retire to their own mansion, where they are “not at home” until the following Sunday, when their appearance

at church, or in public, (as the case may be) is the signal for acquaintances and friends to commence a series of congratulating visits—which, truly, must be one of the most certain means of embittering the “*lune de miel*.”

It appears that Captain Roslyn had determined on starting *en route* to join his regiment on the evening of the bridal : and, as Mr. Douglas still required the cooler climate of Bangalore, he parted from his daughter neither sadly nor hopelessly ; for his medical attendants were sanguine that his case was no longer a dangerous one, In his son-in-law he had found the very person best calculated to ensure the felicity of his child ; and, as he handed her into her handsome palanquin, and saw them both carried away by their separate sets of *bhoys* (bearers), he thanked

Heaven for having bestowed so worthy a husband upon her,

Captain Roslyn had forwarded tents and a riding-horse to Balconda, twenty miles from Bangalore ; where, with a relay of bearers. he counted on arriving the following morning ; and where, as it was a pretty and secluded hamlet in a pastoral country, the young couple resolved to spend a day or two.

Now, it so happened that on the very morning of the marriage—though indeed the projected movements of the happy pair were quite unknown to us—four officers, of whom I made one, had obtained leave of absence for a few days to go on a shooting excursion ; and we were pleasantly encamped at Jugdal a small village out of the direct route to Bellary, surrounded with plains and jungles that absolutely teemed with game. On the

early morning of the day after our arrival, while we were planning the amusements of the day, a party of villagers, in evident excitement and led by the *Thanadar*, or Head of the Native Police of the village, approached us.

“Sahib,” said the thanadar, “a band of *lootties* (marauders) from the hills attacked an *Ingrezi surdar* and his *beebee* (English officer and his lady), not far from Balconda : two of them have been killed by the gentleman, but he is dangerously wounded, and his wife has been carried off. We are hastening to enquire into it, and an express has been sent to——, where there is a detachment of sepoy.”

“And the lady?”

“The lady, sahib, has been—as I said carried off—Alla can only tell whither ! No sooner had the gentleman fallen than the lootties

plundered the palanquin of its contents, and made off. The bearers, who had concealed themselves in the jungle, then returned, but could see nothing of the lady's palanquin, and therefore carried the sahib on to Balconda.

"It must be Roslyn," cried Graham. "Saddle, my lads, and spare not whip or spur."

"Neither let us forget our Mantons," said Youatt.

Now Balconda was only four miles across country and ere five minutes were over we were dashing through bush and brake, over flood and fell—our only path being those narrow foot-tracks, denominated somewhat characteristically by the natives of Hindoostan, *Chour-rusta*—i. e. *Thieves' paths*. Presently however, we were forced to slacken our pace, for the jungle thickened ; and,

coming to a slough, we were obliged to make a detour to avoid it—Youatt and I taking the right hand side, whilst Slade and Graham took the left. We had rounded the quagmire and were entering a woody pass, when the groans of a human being struck upon our ears ; and the next moment we beheld to our great astonishment a handsome palanquin, fully equipped for a journey, with the usual allowance of baskets, gulglets, &c., whilst beside it lay a bearer, covered with blood, and groaning in great pain. We were soon on our feet, and firing off a fowling-piece in order to rally our friends, we tried to render some assistance to the wounded wretch, who was evidently dying. As we stooped over him, his eyes, already glazed, fell upon us ; and the words—“ *Bagh ! bagh !*”—a tiger—were feebly pronounced. He was indeed torn in a pitiable



manner by the claws of a leopard, or panther; for we knew that tigers but rarely wandered in this direction. His throat was laid open, his chest fearfully rent, and altogether he presented an object from which the gazer turned away with horror. We moistened his mouth with water, for he appeared desirous to speak.

"*Sahib*," said he, "*murta houn. Bâgh beebeko le-gya*.—I am dying, sir: a tiger has carried away the lady." We shuddered.

"Where are the other bearers?" I asked.

"*Sub bhag gya*. All have run away."

In five minutes we looked upon a corse; and then we bethought ourselves of examining the palanquin. There were evident traces of its having contained a lady of some rank and elegant habits: the pale

blue silk curtains and linings—the downy cushions, silken fringed—the crimson morocco bedding—the small handsome reading lamp, swung at the foot over the neatly-panelled drawers—and a 'kerchief of the finest cambric on the pillow—all denoted a European woman; while outside the palanquin had fallen a volume. I opened it: it was a copy of Flavel's sweet, quaint "*Saint Indeed!*" and on the fly-leaf were the words—

“MAY DOUGLAS,

“From her loving Father,

“On her Birthday,

“29th. March, 1819.”

We lost not a moment in arranging our plans: Youatt and Graham would ride on to Balconda, to render what assistance they could to Roslyn; Slade should hurry back to Jugdal to order our tents on to Bal-

conda ; while *Coolies* (porters) should be sent to convey the palanquin thither. We knew that within a few miles of where we now stood, a town, once of considerable importance, but now dwindled down into ruins and huts, existed ; and as, on a former occasion, I had visited this place—Khanpore—I was deputed to procure what aid I could from the officials belonging to the Collectorate there stationed, to assist me in searching the jungles for the missing bride. We were now in the heart of a wilderness, which could be scarcely called a wood since the jungle was straggling and composed of shrubs rather than trees. The road from Bellary to Balconda lay not a hundred yards in front of us ; and as matters turned out, we were right in conjecturing, that when Roslyn's palanquin was attacked by the plunderers, the bearers of that which carried

his wife had endeavoured to preserve her by retreating into the thickets, where a still more redoubtable foe awaited them in the Cheeta, or tiger. On the narrow tract which branched off towards Khanpore, I followed the evident traces of the beast of prey until they disappeared down a steep ravine, at the bottom of which brattled a noisy brook.

It was evident that the animal had not retired without a victim—blood, the trail of a heavy substance, shreds of linen, and—last of all—the finger of a human being, lay on the path, as, cautiously advancing with fowling-piece and pistols loaded, I shouted out a good-bye to my friends.

Was it an inhuman thing of me to perceive, with a strange feeling of relief and even joy, that the finger was that of a native? Hope sprang up within me. Might not Mrs. Roslyn have escaped, and found

her way to Khanpore ? or in the long stretch of intricate jungle, might she not have gone astray, and perished ? I had no fears of any peril reaching her through the *lootties* : satisfied with their booty, they would in all probability avoid her, if they encountered her.

However, instead of recounting what befel myself, I shall first tell my readers that Graham and Youatt found Captain Roslyn at Balconda—severely wounded, indeed, from a shot which had perforated his wrist, rendering the use of right arm and hand impossible ; but there was no other danger than that which might be occasioned by the extreme horror and despair—causing an exultation of the brain bordering on delirium—which seized his faculties, on finding, when the conflict was over, in which he had shot one of his

opponents dead, while a blow from his sabre had wounded another beyond all chance of recovery—that his bride had disappeared from the scene. Notwithstanding the extreme pain from his wrist, he had insisted on mounting his horse in order to go in search of her ; but sickness came on, and he was forced to submit to the cares of his servants, who put him to bed, where, indeed, my companions found him—his senses rapidly becoming clouded under the anxieties of a tortured mind.

His servants were attentive ; and the plunderers, satisfied with a bag of rupees which they found in the palanquin, and a very handsome gold watch, had left untouched—or undiscovered—a writing-desk containing many valuables. A medical man might be expected from Bellary before night, whither a despatch had been sent ; and,

whilst Graham remained with the suffering bridegroom, Youatt, attended by some armed peons, set off on a search that proved futile.

Meanwhile I had almost reached Khanpore without interruption of any sort, when as I came within sight of an ancient *kub-beristan*, or Mussulman burying-ground, which told striking tales in its grey mementos of Death, of the abundant Life that once had populated a now ruinous and little frequented town, I beheld, sparkling among the long grass that skirted the road, a woman's bracelet of the richest Indian gold. It seemed to me to be a bright clue to lead me where the Ariadne of my search was concealed. Dismounting, and picking up the jewel, I deposited it in my bosom, and soon reached Khanpore, where, alas! nothing had been heard of the accidents of

the past night. I passed some time in riding about the old dismantled place, and in exploring the jungle near it, but in vain ; and at length, when the heat was no longer endurable, and both myself and my steed were completely knocked up, I betook me to the *chokee*, or police station, where I soon managed to procure grass for my horse ; solacing myself with a mat, a few *chap-patees* (unleavened cakes) and a draught of buttermilk.

When at last, with evening, came coolness, I was again on my way to Balconda, little satisfied with my day's work. I had attained the spot where I had picked up the bracelet, and was pointing it out to the Peon whom the Thanadar of Khanpore had insisted on sending with me, when up from the bushes started so suddenly a strange,



wild figure, that scarcely knowing what I was about, I levelled a pistol at it.

“*Ahista, Maharaj,—mut maro!*” cried a sweet voice,—“Softly, my lord, do not fire!”—and half ashamed of my own vivacity, I examined the object before us.

In the picturesque and many-coloured garb of her race,—her arms covered with bangles of silver,—anklets of the same metal tinkling their tiny bells,—a triple necklace of shells round her neck,—her eyes, dark as night, flashing with energy,—her soft, silken, jetty hair braided,—a Brinjarie girl, not older than seventeen, stood beside us. The Brinjaries are the Bohemians, the gipsies of India: probably they are the primary stock from which all the wandering tribes that exist of the same name, have sprung. The Gitana, the Zingara, the Brinjaie of our sketch, was a beautiful creature—light

and graceful as a gazelle ; and as I gazed on her, I forgot that I was not contemplating a picture.

“ What is all this ?” demanded the Peon, gruffly. But we shall Anglicise as well as we can the answer of our beautiful apparition ; which, delivered in the richest *rekhta* of Hindoostan, sounded to me the sweetest music I had ever heard.

“ Sahib,” she said, with a salaam which Taglioni might have studied with profit in *La Bayadère*, “ my mother and myself were in the jungles this morning before the quail twittered or the wild cock crew. As we were gathering the porcupine quills dropped overnight on the brinks of the brook, and dug for the medicinal roots which we sell to the Punsari (druggist), we came upon what we believed to be some Peri who had rashly permitted the drops of the morning dew to

fall upon her, until she had fainted beneath their weight ! It was a *Weláyeti* (European lady). We succeeded in recovering her from a deep swoon, but *ufsós* ! alas ! her words were unknown to us, and her gestures were the gestures of the *deewáni* (maniac). Her grief was terrible to witness, but at length we conveyed her to our hut, where by the aid of one of those sleep-compelling potions which my mother is skilled in composing, she now lies fast asleep. I have been to the Thanadar, who directed a messenger to summon you back : lo ! where he comes ; he is fat and foolish, and moreover, sahib, the *gup-chup*—(gossip)—is, that his wife, in a jealous fit the other eve, because she saw him speak to me, gave him a blow with the *dòee* (ladle) on the shin, which has lamed him ; so that I have found my way through field and furrow, whilst he has been count-

ing the steps of indolence on the straight-forward path. Follow me !”

In a tent-like shed—scarcely larger than an immense beehive—thatched with palm-leaves, and constructed of bamboo, heavily sleeping, but pale, worn, haggard,—her dress soiled and torn, her fine hair dishevelled, lay on a mat pretty May Douglas ! An old woman, wild-looking, and repulsive but for the genuine kindness which shone from her maternal eyes, as she sat by the poor lady, fanning her with a *vissery*, or hand-punka of *kuskus*-grass, which having been dipped in water, emitted at every wafture a delicious odour,—beckoned us to be silent, as we entered. I instantly despatched a peon to Balconda for the palanquin ; and sooner than might have been anticipated, Mrs. Roslyn—still unconscious from the potency of a heavy opiate, and ig-

norant of her own bliss—was conveyed to the very arms of her husband, almost recovered by the sight of his restored treasure !

By her mother's directions, Hèva, the Brinjarie girl, ran by the side of the palanquin, bearing with her certain herbs, from which to prepare a beverage which would, she affirmed, speedily disperse the fumes of the narcotic which had been so judiciously given to the lady. And it was even as she said ; nor shall I dwell upon the rapture with which the newly-wedded pair, so lately united, so fearfully separated, so providentially restored to each other, recognized the preserving mercy of an Omnipotent will !

A return to Bangalore was necessary for the perfect restoration of Captain Roslyn ; and it was on an evening not long after, when myself and my companions were sit-

ing in Mr. Douglas's veranda beside the Roslyns, that Mrs. Roslyn thus spoke :—

“ It is impossible for me ever to forget the dreadful, *dreamlike reality*—if I may so term it—of that incident. I had fallen asleep ; and awoke under the impression that I was still dreaming ; for I heard the discharge of fire-arms, the clash of swords, and loud yells and cries ; whilst the palanquin was violently jostled, and hurried along at a rapid but uneasy and unequal pace. At length, aroused to the consciousness that it was no nightmare which oppressed me, I drew aside the palanquin door—we were amongst rocks and trees,—the branches of the latter brushing the litter as we passed. But in another moment, before I could ask what was the matter, there was a fierce growl,—a piercing shriek—and darting from the woods, an animal, whose fiery

eyes shone amidst the pervading gloom, was upon us :---the palanquin was dashed down ...I know not what ensued ; I have a faint recollection of seeing a white-robed shape dragged away by what I concluded to be a tiger...of rushing out of the palanquin, and stumbling over a wounded and moaning man ...of springing into the woods in an opposite direction from that pursued by the tiger... and then I became senseless.

“ When I recovered, the faint dawn of earliest morning began to gild the bushes among which I lay. The ground was wet with dense dew...the brakes, covered with elegant parasites, gave out a refreshing fragrance...and, even in the almost frenzy of my terror, inspired me with an indefinable sensation of joy at the coming light of day ; which brought to my eyes birds and leaves, to my nostrils perfume, and to my spirit

hope! I prayed fervently—and rising, wandered about, in vain endeavours to extricate myself from the jungle: I know not how long I wandered thus; my arms and hands—look at them; when will they be fit to be seen?”—and her father and husband, between whom she sat kissed tenderly each the hand that was next to him! ..“ At last I came upon a little track; and, wishing to follow it, was dragging my weary, limbs and wounded feet along, when lo! right in front of me stood a strange ill-favoured animal, unknown to me—and, as it cowered, and opened wide its jaws, grinning and absolutely uttering a sort of fiendish laugh, I then felt that reason was departing from me; and madly I clapped my hands, and shrieked, and hooted, and—the creature fled!—What was it, Eric?”

“ A hyena—the *dummelgundy*, as the na-



tives call it," said I,—“a cowardly animal at best.”

“I had not gone far, as I think, ere, as I crept through some bushes, I staggered and fell across something which felt cold and clammy—ah! I dare not think of it! I started up to look at what the very touch of had made me recoil with horror. An enormous reptile lay coiled round a substance the nature of which I could not distinguish, but I suspected it to be the half devoured remains of a kid, or antelope. I saw that I had actually fallen across the swollen and livid coils of a huge Rock-snake, or boa-constrictor—which—gorged to surfeited stupefaction, scarcely stirred whilst for a moment I lay across it. I tottered away—faint unto death...and then sensibility utterly deserted me, and my senses with it; for I knew nothing more then that there were

kind and soothing accents in mine ears—gentle and feminine hands about me ;—and then there came a long sleep...a long dream—and I awoke with *you*, dearest Eric !”

The good and warmhearted Brinjaries still continue to enjoy the benefits of the rewards that were ensured to them by the grateful Roslyns and their father. As for pretty May Douglas and her excellent Eric, they rank amongst my best and happiest friends.

## CHAPTER VII.

## AN APRIL FOOL IN THE JUNGLES.

WHEN the hill-fort of Nundydroog, in the Mysore Rajah's dominions, was a military station—which it has ceased to be for many years—its sole attraction consisted in the fund of amusements which its mountains, woods, and plains afforded to the eager sportsman. There was a constant plentitude

of game—from the tusky wild-hog, larding itself with saccharine fat from its banquet of sugar-canes, to the timid Asiatic hare, so much more diminutive and less juicy than its European namesake. The hills abounded in partridges, black and brown...the former so peculiar from their screaming attributes. The leopard and panther occasionally drew hunting parties to attack them in the ravines. The plains—those long dreary savannahs, covered with thick and bristly speargrass, through which the sportsman has literally to *wade*, with stockings off or booted to the knee to prevent the unbearable irritation occasioned by its prickly awns which stick in sock and stocking, excoriating the skin—the plains were rife in foxes for a chase ; or, for the pedestrian, hares, bustard, and florikin, lurking amidst grey stones, or

among the scoria of chasmy gravel pits, while quails sprang up at every footfall.

Amidst the short narrow valleys that dissected the hills, might now and then be seen a stretch of *jheel*, or marsh ; in which, at proper seasons, there was no difficulty in coming upon wild-duck, teal and widgeon ; while the *paddi* grounds, or rice-fields, at that period, when from the process of irrigation the plants were covered with water up to the embryo ear, abounded in delicious snipes. In the adjoining jungles the peacock and the porcupine shared the rich solitude with less innocent denizens. We had certainly no forests of teak, to harbour elephantine prey. Rumours of tigers were rare, floating about but at remote intervals ; nor were there bison, elk, or neelghai, in our woods ; but we had all the game I have named at our disposal, with this one draw-

back—a brooding malaria, that soon afterwards led to the evacuation of the place as a military post.

Nundydroog is, as I have said, a strong hill-fort in the Madras Presidency. Situated on the very summit of a mountain, which has been accounted 1700 feet high and inaccessible through three-fourths of its circumference, it ranked as one of the principal strong holds of the Marhattas, from whom it was captured by Hyder Ali, after a tedious blockade of no less than three years: an equal number of weeks sufficed to place it in the hands of the British, in 1791, when it was taken by storm after an obstinate defence. In the year 18—, ours was the only battalion cantoned there; and the occurrences I am about to relate took place in that season when Madras is at its hottest, and winds—finding no dews nor

showers to cool them—waft airs around that seem like exhalations from a heated oven. It was about the end of March that I became the prime mover of a jest, played off upon a young griffin who had recently joined us: a jest that that led to my subsequent performance of the undignified part that confers a title on this Chapter —“ The April Fool in the jungles !”

The juvenile ensign, by name Hills, was a fine, frank youth ; abundantly *green*, to be sure ; and consequently—as all griffins are—he was constantly subjected to the thousand-and-one contrivances by which his messmates, initiated by similar processes into the mysteries of “ life in the colonies.” strove to puzzle, perplex, or dupe him. Idleness is the original toad which hatches the cockatrice egg that produces mischief ; and though with us all was fun and *gaieté de*

*ceur*—malice being a thing that mixed not with our frolics—the joke in question was very nearly proving a black and fatal one in its effects to me. The tricks, that are *mise en action* to enlighten the new arrival through the medium of a deceiving lens, are seldom followed by such results.

“ Hills says he wants to purchase a smart young *tattoo* (pony),” said I, one day when our new friend was absent :—“ suppose we borrow Subidar\* Chinnoo’s old white hack, *make it up* into a young bay, and pretend to sell it to him ?”

Upon this hint, we acted in concert. The Subidar, one of our most esteemed Native officers, was a jolly old fellow, and entered heartily into the spree—lending his

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\* A Native officer.



faithful steed of many years for the plot ; and putting us in the way of the suggested *making up*, with an inventive facility which conduced to corroborate certain reports that were afloat regarding the worthy Chinnoo's expertness in such acts in his youth, when he was a horse-dealer. It may be as well to state, that among the Jack Sheppards of the East, he who steals a steed is the most honoured. He who steals a steed deserves eulogy ; but he who sells that same steed to its plundered proprietor, as another horse with a new colour, is exalted to the very highest altitude of fame. The Seiks, who are the most dexterous horse-thieves of all Asiatic tribes, frequently resort to what is termed "*ghorèko rung denèkee kàm*," or horse-staining art. Now, as the beast upon which we had to exercise our dyeing capabilities was a white one, it so happened that

after a rigorous and carefully scientific application of cow-dung, turmeric, and other staining matter, procured by Chinnoo, the venerable white tattoo carracoled before the mess-house, on a certain day in March, nothing more or less than a *golden bay*!

Poor Hills, whose ignorance as a connoisseur of cavalry equalled my own, was easily induced to purchase the tattoo; and for the following three days might be seen vainly endeavouring to *sumjhao*—wheedle—the tortoise-paced animal to break into a trot, on the drill-ground: on the fourth day, for reasons which shall appear, we managed to keep the ensign engaged, so that he had no opportunity of seeing his steed; and on the morning of the fifth—as we adjourned after a long course of *kawaeed*...military exercise...to the mess-house, where we had ordered breakfast to be prepared, we con-

sidered that everything was rife for the *dénouement*.

"A slice of that omelette before you, Hills," said I. "Shall I give you in exchange some of this tamarind-fish?"

"Thank you," answered Hills, "it is too sour for me. I'll take some of the devill'd turkey. Do you eat chutnee with omelette?" (Now, in these modern days, it may be unnecessary to explain the nature of that hot spicy condiment called *chutnee*).

"No; but you may mix a little of it with your *tiar*!" (coagulated milk---called *Dhy* in Hindustani, *Tiar* being a Malabar word; it is of a pleasant sub-acid taste, and eaten with jam or pounded sugar candy. To eat it with chutnee would be a first-rate abomination). "By the bye, Hills, that tattoo of yours proves a failure, I fear."

"A slow coach, decidedly," said Hills

shaking his head ; “ I can’t get him even to trot.”

“ I can’t help thinking he would suit a *bandy* (gig) : suppose you were to buy Suibidar Chiunnoo’s pony—which he wishes to sell—and drive tandem. They would make a capital pair.”

“ They are so like each other,” chimed in the Colonel.

“ Like, sir ?” cried Hills ; “ why the Subidar’s is white !”

“ Well, and what do you call yours—not black ?” put in Crowe.

“ I call it a very bright beautiful bay,” was the reply.

“ What ?” “ What ?” “ What ?” cried severally every one of us, dropping our forks and spoons, and lifting our eyes in feigned surprise. “ Are you mad, Hills ? Why

your tattoo is as white as—as Kutzleben's whiskers."

Everybody laughed but Kutzleben.

"What nonsense!" exclaimed Hills, getting annoyed; "do you mean to say that the pony I bought before you all, is not a bay pony?"

"To be sure we do; no more than it is a bay tree! The creature is a white one, and no mistake."

"I wish you would bet me a dozen of champagne about it," cried Hills.

"Done!" shouted we; "the whole mess bets you a dozen of champagne that your tattoo is white."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Hills,— "as white as the Subidar's pony, or Kutzleben's whiskers."

"Of course! ha, ha, ha!" laughed every

body but Kutzleben, whose nose began to get red—a sure sign of his rising wrath.

“ Done !” and “ Done !”

“ Butler,” said Hills, turning round to the fat Parsee who bore that honourable distinction in our mess,—“ you know my new pony ?”

“ *Hàn, sahib !—yes, sir.*”

“ What do you call its colour ?”

“ *Sahibka ghorra bahot suffide hie.*”

“ Say that in English, butler,” adjured Hills, seeing that we all laughed.

“ Master’s horse is too much white,” responded the Parsee, in his best British.

Hills stared at us, ineffably puzzled.

“ It is an optical delusion,” said Fasken the doctor ; “ it is a disease of the eyes, to which young men recently imported are subject. My dear boy, let me examine them. A blister or two, or a simple issue behind

each ear, may be of use. It is *Eyeogreenonia*."

"D—n *your* eyes!" bellowed Hills, with unmistakable ferocity: "the bet has been taken, and must stand. No shirking now; let's go to the stable at once."

And to the stable we accordingly adjourned; where, in consequence of repeated and thorough ablutions, the tattoo stood, placidly before us—*white as snow*!

It was the stolid look of amazement, almost of fear, with which Hills cried out—"By Jupiter, it *is* white! Well, thank Heaven, my eyes are all right again, so I don't mind losing the bet. They must have been in a dangerous way for me to take that beast for a bay!"—that stirred the embers of our smouldering mirth into an unquenchable blaze of laughter; in which, indeed, Hills heartily joined when matters

were explained to him. The champagne was quaffed joyously, at cost of the mess ; and as he drank my health, as promoter of the joke, I little guessed that he was quietly meditating a return in kind. When it came, however, I felt that I merited the revenge ; though it cost me a series of shivers, sufficient to convert the hottest courage into the chilliest ice.

With the same facility with which I had found aiders and abettors of my projects against him, did he find willing assistants to retaliate upon me ; nor had I a single suspicion of the plot that was in existence, when, one evening as we sat at mess ; a *coolie* (porter) brought in a *chitt* (note) addressed to me, and conceived in the following terms :—



"DEAR C——

"I am on civil duty at Moorgapett, within ten miles of you, across the Dhora hills : be here to-morrow evening, and get leave to pass the night, You shall have a pillaw, some laul shrab, and a ~~char-passe~~\* Your's,

"ELLERSLIE."

Now, Ellerslie was the Collector of the District, and a very good fellow, celebrated for his hospitality, and famed for his pillaws, curries, and *laul shrab*...which men of England call claret. So, without an after-thought, I obtained leave to proceed, on the ensuing afternoon to Moorgapett, and inquired for the bearer of the note, as I was anxious to enlist him as a guide. He had, however, disappeared ; but as I was quite

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\* Bedstead.

ignorant of the country, and merely knew that the village I intended honouring with a visit lay amongst the hilly jungles towards Ghooty, I ordered a guide to be in readiness, determining to take a long afternoon's diversion with my gun, as I went along. Does not the reader already know that I was a resolute pedestrian, seldom mounting a horse? In truth, my equestrian exploits were of so unsatisfactory a nature, that a poetaster, who used to commit what he took for verse, in the columns of the *Madras Courier*, once introduced me into a satirical piece...full of all the mischief of satire without its wit...in the following line :

“ His Pegasus,—the only steed *he'll* ever mount !”

It was four o'clock when I set off on what

I did not in the least expect to turn out a wild-goose chase. The heat in March is intense : it was in fact the First day of April, though it did not then occur to me ; and a hot parching wind blew across the prairie as we proceeded. I shot a quail or two ; but we had slowly gone over four or five miles of our road before anything took place to make me rejoice at having taken my gun, when entering a narrow path that led through a stretch of jungle, we flushed a peacock. Determined upon following up the bird, I plunged into the copse, where I spent nearly an hour in a vain attempt to find it ; and oppressed with heat, I was refreshing my parched mouth with the pleasant acid berries of the Kuronda (*Carrissa carandas*), when a cry from the native who acted as my guide startled me, by the emphasis of terror which seemed to fill it.

"*Dekho, Sami!* Behold, my lord!" were the only words that escaped him, as—to my astonishment—he rushed towards me and clung to me in unmistakable horror. Up amongst the trees, then down upon the ground, and again upon the tops of the bushes, I beheld a large grey monkey, evidently excited by some emotion of rage, or dread. I knew that monkeys are no objects of fear or aversion to the natives of India, by many sects of whom they are regarded with devout veneration, so that the appearance of such an animal by no means accounted for the terror of my companion. The quick eyes of the Paria—for the guide was one of that despised and outcast race—had, however, detected more than struck my vision. In fact, I was at first impressed with the idea that the monkey was mad; for so grotesque were the springs and leaps,

so discordant the yells of the creature as it neared us—now walking almost upright, and now whirling through the air, like a tumbling pigeon,—that there was something quite unusual about it. I had certainly never heard that, in their other analogies to man, the monkeys shared in the maniacal affliction; but even while the supposition crossed me, and as I in vain endeavoured to extract an answer from the trembling Paria, whom I could not shake off, I perceived that the monkey was *not* alone! Struggling through the underwood I could now detect the glistening and viscous skin, the erect, burnished head of a large snake;—its stern eyes fixed on the fleeing ape, which yet, ever and anon, as if impelled by that viperine magnetism which is the secret of its powers of fascination, looked back to gaze

on the very object that loaded its feet with the heavy fetters of dismay !

The Serpent, as well as the Monkey, is held in reverence by the worshippers of Brahma, ; and although my attendant was an outcast, it is not idle to conjecture that sentiments of religious awe mingled with the personal and superstitious apprehensions which were excited by so strange a spectacle as that presented by this conflict between animals accounted as gods. What the warfare symbolled to his mind I know not ; but my own thoughts, as I watched the extraordinary chase, were full of curiosity to witness the termination of the combat. Presently the snake, by an undue vigorous movement, overleaped its prey—thus for a few seconds losing sight of it. It was a huge reptile, at least ten feet in length—of a deep grey, flecked with white except near the many-jointed tail, which was black and like that of a skate,

thorny and acuminate ; and with which it lashed the ground, until every plant that grew near it lay broken ! It was a *Whip-snake*.

The Monkey, meanwhile, aware of its temporary advantage, looked about ; and for the first time appeared to be cognizant of our presence. Was it instinct, then, that suggested the course which it took ? for, as if it knew the natural enmity which exists between man and the serpent, and counted upon that feud as a token of assistance, it sprang suddenly towards us, and with a bound laced its forepaws round the Paria—looking at us with such a look of imploring, *human* suffering, that I could no more withstand it then, than I can describe it now. There was at once an appeal and a trust in that look, of which no one could believe the facial expressions of the ape tribe capable,

It did not scream, nor cry, nor scratch, nor bite—but clung panting and sobbing to the Paria; who turning yellow with deadly fear, fell to the earth: while at the same time, and just as the snake was close upon us, I found myself free from the fellow's grasp, and retreated to a short distance;—praying that the stone-still body of the Paria, on which the reptile had already passed, while the monkey crouched beneath it, might retain its stirless position, I raised my gun and fired!

The reptile fell, shot right through the venomous head! Writhing and loathsome, it lay harmless; while the monkey—apparently safe from tooth and fang—looked up, and with actions as *bizarre* as they were demonstrative of joy, started aside, snuffed at the dead snake, grinned, chattered, mewed, patted the prostrate Paria, and then with



a shrill cry, and a look towards me which said "Thank you!" as plainly as ever tongue spoke, darted away into the wood!

The Paria had fainted from sheer terror, nor was it without some difficulty I restored him to animation. Much time passed ere the panic, that had impaired his senses for the moment, yielded to my assurance of the disappearance of all danger; and when we again broke into the path, the sudden twilight of India was gathering round us. We advanced without interruption at a brisk pace, although the signal danger from which my attendant had so providentially escaped, had materially affected his mind—as was evident from his starts of trepidation at the slightest noise. If the root of a tree across the path looked snake-like in the uncertain light, he would pause, make a détour to

avoid it, or stop altogether till reassured by me. At length, indeed, when I had hoped our proximity to Moorgapett was within a few furlongs, and when the darkness increased so as to render our progress snail-like, what was my annoyance to be told by the trembling wretch that he had mistaken the track, and knew not which of the three paths that here presented themselves to choose ? I considered that to move in any direction was preferable to remaining where we were ; and at a hazard went straight forward, I heard a sound---it was the drums beating off at sunset, and the hills of Nundydroog sent the echos to us. At Moorgapett we could scarcely have heard them. Where were we, then ? I felt hungry and tired ; and great was my relief when the approaching fall of footsteps struck upon my ears. Two men and a woman,

driving a bullock heavily laden, came up ; and hailing them I enquired the distance to Moorgapett.

“ *Panch kutchè koss*—full five coss---ten miles,” was the reply. There was a groan from the guide.

“ *Agoo kooch gawn hie ?*---Is there a village in advance ?” asked I.

“ Yes,” was answered in Hindustani ; “ it is but half a mile by this road to Cargoli ; but you had better go by the right-hand track, as the shorter way is full of *chikkur* ---mud.”

“ Is there a *bungalo*---(a house raised by Government for the accommodation of travellers) at Cargoli ?”

“ No, sir, but an officer is pitched there for the night ; he is on his way from Ghooty to Bellary.”

There was some comfort in these words

for I was obliged to abandon all ideas of going to Moorgapett, from which, though in a different direction, I was almost as far as when we set out: so on we went, though foolishly taking the narrower and nearer way which we had been so kindly, yet uselessly warned against. We had soon good reason to repent having done so, for just as we came within sight of the village lights, as I was joyfully bounding on in front of my wearied guide, I found myself up to the ankles in mud, in marshy ground that required dexterity and extreme caution. . .

*Kubbur dar, sahib; yet to chikkur ka chourbaloo hie!*—“Take care, sir, this is a slough—a quicksand!” cried the Paria; but the words had scarcely passed his lips ere, jumping from a soft and quaking spot upon what I imagined to be a mound of firm soil, I found myself up to my thighs in

the mud. I shouted out to the Paria to help me ; but he was obviously right in not advancing to the rescue, for he could have but shared in my mishap. This, however, did not strike me at the time, so I abused him grossly, but all to no purpose ; or rather to a purpose that utterly confounded me, for he turned away without a word, and fled from the place. I had dropt my gun, and began to feel that every struggle I made to extricate myself only served to implant me deeper in the slough ; and, worse than all ! I experienced a slowly sinking motion, which convinced me that I was penetrating farther into the encroaching mire.

The slime was already up to my waist—a complete panic seized me—a sort of uncertain and capricious delirium invaded my senses. I remembered having heard of a

horse which, stumbling into one of these quagmires, had sunk until it was buried in the mud. A thousand terrible fancies came into my head ; lightning gleamed before my eyes ; my ears were full of the ringing of many bells. I heard the whizzing of balls—the yells of wolves, and as I felt the slime up to my arm-pits, I raised my arms and hands over my head, laughing and screaming in utter frenzy. Then a thought of my boyhood's home—my sweet pastoral home in the Highlands of Scotland—of my mother—of my sister—came over me ; and I prayed ! After which, with the warm paste-like death, slowly, slowly, but surely, glueing up about my very throat, I lost all hope. Suddenly something struck against my head ; the vanished hope returned with the touch, and with it life, sense, energy ! There was a rope in my hands ! How came

it there ? I knew not ; but God gave me presence of mind to fix it firmly about my wrists and arms, and then I clutched it and felt it hauled. There were many vain attempts made to release me—many painful struggles ; but after a time I knew that I was gradually emerging from the mud—and then again I thought that all was over with me, for I swooned.

When I was restored to consciousness, I found myself in a tent, carefully attended by a gentleman in whom I recognized the experienced surgeon of H. M.'s----- Regt. My hands and arms were torn and bleeding ---my shoulder was dislocated---and I suffered great pain. But the dislocation was soon set to rights ; and a copious warm bath, some food, and the greatest kindness and care, with a few hours repose, restored me sufficiently to resolve on going on to

Moorgapett, to my friend Ellerslie. I had done the poor reviled Paria injustice ; acting with a discreet energy for which I did not give him credit, he had abandoned me only to bring succour ; and it came not a moment too soon.

The worthy Doctor insisted on sending me to Moorgapett in his palanquin, as he intended remaining the day at Nundydroog, where he would mention my accident, and where he was expected by the Commandant. It was only four miles to Moorgapett, and I reached it about ten in the morning. What, then, was my astonishment to find that Mr. Ellerslie had neither been there, nor was he expected ! Great as my wonder was, it increased to giant size when I perceived one of our Mess officials approach ; whilst other menials, whose visages were familiar to me, began to pitch a tent...our regi-



mental mess-tent...beneath the mango trees near which I stood !

“ What, in the name of Vishnoo, is all this ?”

“ A parcel for master ;” said the Mess-man.

“ Oh ! from Mr. Ellerslie ?”

“ No, sar, vrom Yensign Hills.”

“ *Hills ?*”-----I opened it. At first I saw nothing but myself ! It was a small twopenny-halfpenny looking-glass, in which I looked in truth more like a filthy ghost than a clean Christian. Over the back was pasted a slip of paper on which was written---

“ *Look at the April Fool in the Jungle !*”

All the truth burst in upon me, like a flash

of lightning ! A note fell from the parcel :  
it contained a few words :—

“ DEAR ROB,

“ Allow me to return, with interest, the hoax you played off upon me some days ago. I pay my debt on the most legitimate date, the 1st. of April. I hope you have enjoyed your trip with some imaginary Collector and his cool claret. To make up for any disappointment, however, you may expect a lot of us to pic nic for the day at Moorgapett, where we shall join you soon after you receive this. Thine much,

“ THOMAS HILLS.”

They came ; but when they heard what had befallen me, and saw the maimed condition I was in, their glee became sincere commiseration ; nor was any one of them more kind or attentive to me in the illness that followed, than Tom Hills. I was borne back to Nundydroog in a palanquin and a

high fever, from which I did not recover for many days : nor did any of us soon forget the

## APRIL FOOL IN THE JUNGLES.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## FAN O' THE FAGOTS:

## A STORY OF DORSET.

I AM going to tell you a story which, notwithstanding its improbability, is as true as that the fire is now blazing briskly in the grate beside me, while the purring cat on the rug, after a milk-banquet, seems to listen, with a selfish enjoyment of her indoor comforts, to the hail that patters

against the window-panes. In all classes of society, as well as under every modification of circumstance, materials may be found for the seeking, wherewithal to mould a hero or construct a heroine. There are more tragedies in real life than there are on the modern stage ; and though they may not be invested with those attributes of display that fit them for dramatic representation, they are, nevertheless, productive of more tears, than the poet's fictions are capable of wringing from the eyes of hard-hearted " Young England." The Hobbima-sketches of the cess-pools of society, which were so eagerly—too eagerly—sought after some years back, revolting though they were, had yet their germ of truth ; without which, indeed, they could scarcely have excited the attention they did. It is only the natural that can permanently attract ; but we doubt whe-

ther the most extravagant author has invented more than the truth, unless when compelled—a literary Prospero—to call “Spirits from the vasty deep,” to forward his views. The atrocities of a Jack Sheppard, and the crimes of an intellectual monster, possess...even in their exaggeration ...a claim upon the attention of him who walks through mud and mire, as well as over glade and greensward, to study nature in all its various ramifications. Life is a poem, made up as frequently of sentiments as of events ; but it is incident which makes it a drama.

The tale I have to tell is not one of sensation ; but refers to the physical condition of man, inasmuch as it is an actual outline of evil deeds done, provoking their own punishment. Alas that the guilt of the guilty should so often compromise the inno-

cence of the innocent! Why do we not contrive to *prevent* crime, rather than pride ourselves on the punishment of it?

Not far from Weymouth, and near a little, retired hamlet...of which it is said, "Into Bincombe and out of the world,"...resided many years ago, an old gentleman of independent fortune, accumulated in the East India Company's service. On his return from Madras, where the greater portion of his life had been spent, he found that, with the exception of one younger brother, he had not a relative in existence. That brother, a man of profligate life and extravagant habits, received him to an uncomfortable house, recently bereft of its mistress by death; nor could even the natural kindness of the new-comer's heart blind him to the unpalatable fact, that the warmth of his reception was occasioned

more by the known amount of his wealth, than by his blood-affinity to his host. But there was one being in the house of his brother, who, in her bright and spotless truthfulness, soon learned to love the old nabeb ...to console him...to amuse him in hours of indolence or unease...and to make him feel, even at his very heart, that there was still something in England, on earth, to make existence sweet to him. For *her* sake, for the sake of his niece, he bore with the uncongenial disposition of his brother ; nor had he long to do so. A fit of apoplexy, caused by self-indulgence, stretched Walter Burton on a bed from which he never rose again. Speech was denied him in his last moments ; but it was painfully evident to all who witnessed them, that from his oppressed mind secrets of importance were struggling for escape, which he in vain tried



to divulge. The paralysed limb refused to hold the pen—the torpid tongue to utter the sentence of revelation ; and as his eyes glared wildly on his horror-struck child, seeming for a moment to soften into peace as he saw her clasped in the affectionate arms of his brother, two words—only two—escaped him.

“ *No !---Niece !* ” he yelled, rather than uttered ; and with these words rushed forth the red life in a suffocating gush of gore !

What needed that thus anxiously he should implore his kind-hearted brother’s protection for a child, beggared by his own lavish expenditure ? Yet no other meaning could be supposed to lurk beneath the painful gesture and the final words, than the—“ No ! you will not forsake your

niece!" into which the hearers had transformed them?

And, truly, Rosalie Burton had small cause to lament a parent, whose memory was linked with a thousand domestic cruelties towards that mild and broken-hearted mother whose decease had been her first great grief. For herself, her father had always evinced an unnatural dislike, which increased rather than diminished on the death of her only brother, a fine youth several years her junior.

The remains of the deceased were no sooner consigned to the grave, than Mr. Burton made up his mind to retire to his native Dorset. A few distant relatives of the late Mrs. Burton proffered luke-warm kindness to Rosalie, but the girl was attached to her uncle, and he would not hear of parting with her. A small but elegant house near

Bincombe was soon secured ; and the uncle and niece resided there happily, blessed in each other and in a select circle of friends. Of congenial tastes, both were fond of books, music, and flowers ; and two years flew quickly by ere any circumstance occurred likely to materially affect the fortunes of Rosalie Burton, now a fair and lovely creature of eighteen.

A fine breezy morning in August had induced her to extend her walk by the sea-side, after having deposited her uncle, with a newspaper, among the long grassy softnesses that form so many pleasant resting-places on the downs towards Lulworth. She had rambled on, nearly a mile—taking a rich and innocent delight in the freedom of her loneliness ; ever and anon stooping to pick a wild flower, or pausing to look at the far cliffs of Lulworth, shewing through

solar enchantments strange and prismatic colours. At times, too, she would leap gamesomely from bank to bank, while a brief burst of song rang from her rosy lips ; for well she knew that the seaside path she had chosen was seldom intruded on by pedestrians ; and she cared not that the smiling herd-boy on the hill-side watched her gambols, for all knew and loved the Lady of Bincombe. She soon, however, reached an inlet, or creek, which—when the tide was low—admits of foot-passengers ; but the tide was up, and she was on the point of retracing her steps, when suddenly she became aware of the proximity of a human being, whose person was well-known to her, but with whom circumstances had never before brought her into contact.

Not far from Bincombe, in a wretched hut, resided an old man ; still stout of limb,

though verging on eighty. John Aylesbury had known better days ; but though death had taken from him wife and children, and with them went many comforts, he was still too proud to beg, too honest to steal ; and he was fain to look after any little and light job which might fall in his way in the stable-yards, or about the esplanade of Weymouth : and many were the charitable individuals who were pleased with the honest industry of poor John, and his kindness to the only other inmate of his cottage—a half-witted sister, whose youth had brought shame to her father's home, and whose declining years added to the poverty and destitution of her brother.

Fanny Aylesbury, or, as she was called, Fan o' the Fagots, on account of her sole occupation being the collecting and selling of such bundles of sticks as she found in

her diurnal rambles, was—after all—only the step-sister of John, than whom she was nearly twenty years younger. In extreme youth she had been a beauty ; and, being originally vain and idle, she was easily induced to resign a life of creditable industry for the brief and unstable enjoyments of vicious opulence. Cast off by her “*protector*,” (strange world-term for one whose object is *destruction*!) for alleged faithlessness, her fate was for many years unknown to her relations ; and when she again reached Bincombe, where, with the exception of her brother, there was not one who was allied to her, none who would have recognized in the thin, haggard, and wild-eyed beggar-woman who craved a morsel of food, and a rag to cover her, the once fair but frivolous Fanny Aylesbury. John’s wife was then alive ; and they were better

off than in after-times. They received the vagrant with a kindness she seemed to feel ; but the discovery was soon made that a silent, sullen moodiness, amounting to madness, had taken hold of her faculties ; and neither persuasion nor affliction could obtain from her a single particular relating to her past life. Neither would she work, nor do anything but wander about from morn till night, collecting sticks, logs of wood drifted ashore, and furze and heath, all of which were taken home. Years were thus passed, and John was left wifeless and childless—almost a beggar ; but there came no change over his nature. His treatment of Fan was ever invariably kind ; and latterly, she had, without any prompting of his, thrown some system into her chosen task, for she was now an expert binder of fagots, earning many a penny by her labours ; and quietly, without

a word, indeed, were all her little gains deposited in John's hands. Nobody *liked* Fan o' the Fagots, for there was a repulsive gloom about her that flung back all sympathy ; but all kind hearts pitied her, looking upon her as almost a maniac. Yet it might have formed matter for speculation, whether her obstinate silence proceeded from a deep yet proud remorse, or was the show of a spirit under the Protean influence of insanity.

It was Fan o' the Fagots who, now, evidently unconscious of observation, attracted the attention of Rosalie. She was a tall, lean woman ; her countenance...not without a certain remnant of beauty—betraying the traces of care and trial more than age, and her hair, grizzled with early grey, escaping freely from the old drab bonnet which she wore ; whilst her homely garments were



scarcely concealed by a scanty cloak of dull red. Beside her, as she crouched close to the brink of the creek, was flung one of those fardels of sticks whence she derived her nickname ; and, as she kept muttering to herself, the natural curiosity of youth induced Rosalie to bend forward through the furze bushes which divided them.

“Better to die,” said the poor creature,...  
“better to die than live and toil. I hate life, and I hate work : they are two evil things to the poor and the old and the wicked !”

For a moment she stooped her head on her knees ; and in the next, with a wild gesture springing up and forwards, she was plunging into the waters of the creek. Rosalie had no time for thought, had no time for screams ; the impulses of a kind and bold young nature were at once imprudently obeyed, and

she was up to the waist in water, in the attempt to save from suicide the crazed woman, ere the strong grasp of the already repentant creature, clinging to her robe and bearing her down, taught her to feel that fear of death which now for the first time iced her heart. She felt that she was sinking under the burden of her whom she would have saved ; and the water, that already bubbled up to her neck, striving...as it were...to enter those sweet lips, thence to ravish life, almost choked the cry of agony that arose from her, but which was yet answered by a shout of encouragement !

A horse and rider were on the bank. In a moment the steed was discarded—in another the rider had borne to the shore the senseless forms of the two females—for both had fainted. His shouts collected some people, at work in the adjacent fields ; and

the objects of his humanity were soon safe and alive under the hospitable roof of Mr. Burton. A welcome guest, thenceforward, was Percy Saville there !

Old John Aylesbury was soon apprised of what had befallen his sister, who for many days lay a carefully attended sufferer in Bincombe Hall. A violent brain-fever had been the consequences of the wretched woman's attempt at self-destruction, while the youth of her preserver guaranteed her from the evil effects of so sudden an immersion.

Meanwhile both the nabob and his niece had learnt, with the ready quickness of affectionate and grateful natures, to love their daily visiter ; whom they valued not the less when they discovered him to be the intimate friend of their acquaintances, the Kinglakes of Weymouth. On their return one morning from a walk, finding that Dr.

Standfast was with the invalid, they stepped into her room to enquire how she was.

"Free from delirium," whispered the doctor, "but weak and low."

"Who is that?" cried the sick creature, as her eyes, vacantly wandering over the group, rested upon the gentle face of Rosalie, who, in reply to the query, had sprung towards the bedside.

"This is the young lady of whom I have been telling you," said Dr. Standfast, "who nearly lost her life in endeavouring to preserve yours. She is the niece of Mr. Burton here, under whose roof——"

"Burton!" interrupted the woman, gazing so wildly on the party that the good doctor feared a relapse into frenzy:—"No, no! *that* is not Walter Burton!"

"How very strange!" whispered Rosalie, "Walter was my father's name."

A glance was exchanged betwixt the medical man and the nabob—a glance that betrayed the birth of strange doubts in both minds.

“She is raving,” said Mr. Standfast, in a low tone; “you had better retire:” and he led Miss Burton to the door. Scarcely had she departed ere Mr. Burton, approaching the bed, asked Fan if she had known his brother, Walter Burton?

“Know him!” she uttered, moaning deeply; “I know nothing but that I am a poor mad creature---made mad by woman’s vanity and man’s unholy passions.---And *she*, that sweet young lady, is Walter Burton’s child?...Well, well!...And lives he still?”

“No, my good woman, he is dead; but if he has ever wronged you, confide in me for the redress of those wrongs.”

“Dead?...and I cursed him but yesterday!” said the woman, as she fell into convulsions, from which it was some time ere she recovered. When she did so, the first object that met her eyes was Percy Saville...who had drawn near to assist Dr. Standfast, and was now for the first time visible to her. A strange soreness of heart had filled his eyes with tears, as he held the quivering frame of the sufferer in his arms; and the naturally open and benign expression of his countenance arrested her attention.

“Are you my preserver?” she said, in the low voice of exhaustion.

“With God’s help!” humbly replied the young man. But whether the excitement of strange memories had overtaken the feeble intellects of poor Fan, or the doctor had been deceived in adjudging her free from

brain-fever, was doubtful ; for, as Percy spoke, she sprang wildly up in her bed, seized him by the wrist, and exclaiming--

“ It is all a dream ! Walton and he ! ”  
fell back again in temporary insensibility.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two months passed away...a short space of time, yet long enough to ripen love. Love, that dream of the troubled sleep which men call existence, overshadowed with its fairest visions the two young creatures who, morn and eve, were to be seen wandering together on the green Nothe, with its fine seaward views ; or round the grey ruins of Sandesfoot Castle ; or on towards Portland, quarried 'midst quarries ; or over the verdant heights of their own Bincombe.

Often, too, would they stop at John Aylesbury's hovel...now made comfortable and snug...whence they never departed without the benediction of the restored Fagot-woman. None saw the paroxysms of passionate tears shed by the half-crazed creature, as she sat watching their retiring forms ; or, if seen, the beholder would have ascribed them to insanity. Yet Fan was an altered being...calmer, quieter, but with a heavy look about the eyes that told of concentrated care.

Our affections are sometimes strengthened by the pains they cause us ; but there were no pains, no jealousies, no hindrances to the sweet unrebuked affection that knit those young creatures heart to heart. Yet no love could be stronger, truer, purer ; and everybody—almost everybody but Fan O' the Fa-



gots—knew that Percy Saville was now the declared lover of Rosalie Burton.

And who was Percy Saville?

“I am a mysterious personage—quite a Radcliffean here,” said he, with a melancholy smile, as, on the day he had permitted himself to tell his love to Rosalie, he sat beside her and her uncle on the grassy hillock, near the spot where they had first met.

“And it remains for you both to say—when you know what I am—or, rather, when you know as much about me as I do myself—whether I may still dare to encourage a passion which, with most rare generosity to a stranger, you have smiled upon. You already know from my kind friend Sir Charles Kinglake, who advised me to be the teller of my own tale, that I am possessed of property to the amount of a quiet five hundred

a-year ; and that though I have studied for the bar, I prefer the indulgence of literary labours to the wear and tear of lawsuits. But you know not that I have derived my large name and small fortune from no ancestral line...from no paternal fount.—I am a *foundation* !”

“ Good Heavens !” cried Mr. Barton, starting ; whilst Rosalie...whose hand had rested on her uncle’s knees, quietly withdrew it and placed it within her lover’s...turning, as she did so, her sweet face towards him with a look that kept him silent from unutterable bliss.

“ Yes, dear friends,” he continued, “ all that is known of me is, that I was found at the door of a rich but eccentric old maiden lady, who resided in Saville Row, in London. Miss Percy was a distant relative of

Lady Kinglake, the only one of her kinsfolk with whom she associated in amity ; for she was of a whimsical temper, and had for many years lived abroad, or in almost complete retirement when in England. However, to me, chance-thrown upon her never-slumbering charity, she became parent and friend. She loved me as a mother ; no son could cherish her more tenderly than I did.

I was found by herself, on her return from an early walk : no gauds, whispering of secret high connexion, accompanied the, no doubt, beggar's brat, who, wrapped in rags, was deposited at her threshold ; and no investigation led to the detection of the wretched, perhaps guilty, authors of my being. Yet she rather rejoiced than regretted that no discovery was made ; cherishing me,

and (as Sir Charles will tell you) lavishing on me the whole pent-up affection of a long and lonely life. She had me christened in the presence of the Kinglakes, giving me her own name prefixed to that of the locality in which I was found. I was educated carefully, if not showily : attended her abroad, passing whole years in Germany and France ; and never found her love exacting, her censure burdensome ; so that when she died, a year ago, bequeathing me the all I possess, I shed such tears over her grave as the loving son weeps for a loving mother. And now——”

He paused, for he could not proceed ; and it was only the redoubled pressure of the kind fingers that intertwined with his that reassured him.

“ And now,” interposed Mr. Burton, look-

ing up and smiling, "be you baron's bantling or 'beggar's brat,' you are still dear and welcome to James Burton and his niece."

\* \* \* \* \*

What a season of bliss was that which succeeded to the conversation we have detailed ! Alas ! that all this ringing PLEASURE should be but the sounding rattles to announce the approaching snake—PAIN ! We have a *mauvais pas*—a dark step—in our story to make, and we care not to loiter as we move along.

Among the many groups of round, grotesque hills near Bincombe, or rather *upon* them, are numerous mounds, cairns, or barrows—relics of antiquity—perhaps

places of sepulture of mighty ones of the olden time. Now, it happened one morning that Percy Saville, rambling alone, came upon one of the most retired of those heights, where, to his astonishment, he found Fan o' the Fagots busily employed in raising a massive pile of wood, already of no inconsiderable proportions. The woman started as he approached, but instantly recovered herself.

“And where is your sweet sister-spirit, good angel-gentleman?” asked she.

“Lazy, this morning, Fan,” replied Saville; “but what brings you here? Is all this huge pile intended for a bonfire to do honour to our marriage?”

“Marriage?” cried the woman, beginning to tremble visibly: “what mean you, sir?”

“Do you not know,” answered he, won-

daring at the violent excitement of her manner, "that your favourite Lady of Bincombe will in a few short days be my wedded wife?"

A shriek passed the lips of the woman as, her lips white with some sudden sickness, her eyes glaring wildly, she stood before him, a subject for a painter who would willingly embody extreme horror.

"What ails you, good Fanny?" demanded Saville, in some alarm. "Surely, I have said nothing but what should please you!"

A change came over the face of the woman, and her eyes filled with tears.

"Oh! tell me," she cried,—"tell me that you have only been jesting with poor Fan; that you are not going to be married to Miss Buxton,—and I will bless you!"

“ Nay, you are unwell, my poor friend,” said Percy, soothingly ; “ you love us both, and cannot wish us who love each other to live apart.”

“ I tell you,” she exclaimed, again speaking loudly, “ that it must not be. Who is she that is so bold as to wed your mother’s son ? I love you both too well to listen to such things. Young man, look not thus upon me angrily, for—*I am your mother !*”

Percy was thunderstruck : not that for a moment he credited her wild assertion, but he feared that insanity in some new and dangerous shape had seized the woman ; and he took her hand, and tried to soothe her.

“ No, no !” she cried, as again and again she kissed his hand, “ I am not ill, or mad. This last stroke brings a pang which madness might cure. I tell you, boy, you are *my*



son as surely as Rosalie is the daughter of *your* father, Walter Burton! Hear me!" she continued, falling on her knees,—“hear me confess to God and you, that I am your mother as certainly as that the mole on your right cheek has its fellow on your left breast!"

“Oh, God!" groaned the wretched young man, “can this be a reality, or but some fearful dream? There is indeed a mole upon my breast.”

“My child! my child!" wailed Fan o' the Fagots, as she dashed herself on the ground at his feet—“curse me not, as I have cursed you; when abandoned to want and misery by my seducer, I bore you to the door of a rich mansion in Saville Row, there leaving you—for I had not the heart to kill you. I left you there—I fled, I knew not

whither ; and for years all memory of the past was a blunted sensation, for I became mad, and was confined in some bedlam-cell. When I recovered, I learnt that the charitable lady who had occupied that house had taken you with her abroad, where both had died. But no sooner did I behold you here, than my heart claimed you. I remembered the name of Percy—of Savilla. I remembered the mole on your cheek—but I dared not speak, for I never suspected that you loved your companion with more than a brother's love. Now, indeed, the punishment of Heaven falls heavily on me."

And again she dashed her furrowed forehead in the dust ; while crushed beneath the weight of his own wretchedness, the convinced and despairing youth experienced a grief that knew not tears. At length the

cruel selfishness of his anguish struck him ; he bent over her whom he could no longer doubt was his mother ; he raised her tenderly in his arms, and spoke soothingly to her.

“ Bless you,” she murmured, “ bless you ! but go—reveal all as soon as may be : it is a duty that should neither be postponed nor avoided. Go...but see me not again till this great grief has subsided, and you can look at me without hatred !”

“ He arose in that stupefaction of mind which would have induced him to yield passively to any command, howsoever unreasonable ; and ere another hour he was with Sir Charles Kinglake—for he dared not go to Bincombe.

“ My poor boy,” cried the worthy baronet, on his return from Fan o’ the Faggots, to

whom he had hastened on hearing the recital of his young friend, with a faint hope of eliciting some intelligence contradictory of her former statement,—“it is all too true ! I found her where you left her. There was agony in her breast, but no madness, She told me all, clearly, succinctly.”

“I knew it would be so,” said Percy, as he now freely wept in the arms of his sympathising friend : “I have written to Mr. Burton—to Rosalie !” He could not say “*sister !*”

“’Tis well. The steamer is ready. From Jersey you can speedily pass to France. Thence with me. And now, dear Percy, a stout heart, and a belief that God never sends us such trials but for wise, ay, and for kind purposes—and all will yet go well ! There, lean upon me ; George has seen that

every thing you require is on board ; and rely on me that your poor suffering mother shall be cared for."

And thus, while the inmates of the Hall were wondering at the unusual absence of Percy Saville, a tragedy was being played which threatened to sever him from them for ever ! Both uncle and niece were pondering anxiously on the probable cause of their friend's non-appearance, when Sir Charles Kinglake was announced. The baronet had a terrible task before him, but he possessed judgment, tenderness, and religion. He told the tale guardedly ; he poured a balm into every wound he made ; and though the sorrow he witnessed was so harrowing as to unfit him for anything for several days, he saw that he had acted wisely ; and that his hearers were blessed

with the same genuine trust in God's justice and mercy that cheered his own spirit, But grief will have its course, and Rosalie was spared the knowledge of a scene of new horror which took place the ensuing day, by a violent fever; which for some weeks chained her in complete seclusion to her chamber.

\* \* \* \*

While Percy Saville was momentarily increasing the distance that separated him—he almost hoped for ever—from her whom he could not without a thrill of horror think of as a sister—and from her who he dared not doubt was his mother,—bright rose the sun, and like molten gold poured down its rays on the green, treeless hills of Weymouth.

And there again, on that remoter mount, beside an enormous pile of wood, now twice the size it was the day before, stood Fan 'o the Fagots! That night of thought and woe of aching remorse had worked a fearful change upon her. Despair, that dashes out its mad brains against the stones of disappointed hope, had in one night shrivelled the spare form and wrinkled the haggard brow. Her eyes were wild and bloodshot; the lurking fever in her veins had scorched up the healthful dews of sorrow from her eyes. A frantic smile—the smile that is joyless, and fearful to look upon—passed across her visage as she gazed on her work; and then not even when on the threshold of her last black offence, forgetting Him whose mercy never forgets His creatures she knelt and prayed!

Who dares to say that the prayers of madness, bursting from the rent and penitent spirit, ascend fruitlessly to the Great Listener ?

Then up she started—tore some branches aside—and there, within the pyre, thick-heaped of dry wood and furze, lo ! a little resting-place, enough to hide her withered form, appeared ! What may this mean ? She enters in—drags the displaced fagots over her, shutting out light and air—and lo ! ere one could count a hundred, up from the steaming pile whirl into the blue air dense clouds of suffocating smoke ! And now all is thick vapour, until behold ! where, again, from every crevice and crack bursts forth the blazing fire !

The conflagration was not to spend itself unnoted. for it had not burnt long ere there



were many gazers on the surrounding heights; and flocking towards the hissing mass ran wondering crowds. The long, hard, summer dried grass, with which the hill was covered—shrieked—riven by the fire : but there were louder shrieks from the blazing fagots ; and all at once, as the frightened groups of spectators drew near, a Living Shape, bearing the aspect of nothing human, leaped up once through the flames, and with a hideous yell sank down again—never more to rise !

\* \* \* \*

Weeks had passed—and at last Rosalie Burton, restored to her uncle from the very brink of the grave, had accompanied him to London. The terrible fate of poor Fan o' the Fagots was carefully concealed from the

suffering girl, whose delicate health continued to excite great apprehensions in the minds of her friends, yet her grief, thus preying upon health and happiness, was "not loud, but deep:" like the wounded lioness that runs to the shades to hide her scars and to lick them in solitude, she mourned in the loneliness of her spirit over the wounds of her heart.

One evening she sat beside her uncle and Sir Charles Kinglake, who had come with them to town, and was pensively engaged over some fancy-work, when Mr. Burton—leaving the room for a moment—returned with an antique casket, which had been the property of Rosalie's mother.

"Thank you, uncle," said she; "I wanted some more beads, and how kind of you to recollect where I had deposited them before—"

She paused, for she too remembered that when last that casket had been opened Percy was beside her:

"There is the key, dear uncle, open it, please!"

Something, however, had got into the keyhole; and as Mr. Burton was endeavouring to clear away the impediment, he upset the casket which stood on the edge of the table, and falling on the floor, it was shivered into fragments! Beads and rings and trinkets of all sorts rolled about the carpet; but amongst them appeared some pieces of discoloured manuscript, which Rosalie knew she had not placed within the jewel-case. What could they be? picking them up, she read a few words to herself—held the papers out to her uncle—and with

a wild shriek of joy fell fainting into his outstretched arms !

Those papers accounted for the last struggling anxiety to express what they contained, evinced by Walter Burton on his death-bed. They were authentic documents, clearly proving that Rosalie was the daughter of the late Mrs. Burton by a secret marriage, entered into at an early age. Miss Lacey had imprudently wedded a young officer of the name of Clavering ; and knowing that the avowal of their union would be attended by her expulsion from her home, she prevailed upon her youthful husband—himself without family or fortune—to conceal it for at least a season. But they had not been married three months ere the unfortunate young man was drowned ; and, in addition to her grief for his loss, the poor widow sorrowed over the

certainly that she would be a mother. She had long been the object of Mr. Walter Burton's addresses, and her father—a stern and worldly man—insisted on her marrying him. In this strait she resolved on an appeal to her persecutor's clemency,—and in an interview with him, confessed all. But she appealed to one who only thought of *self*; and then, on his solemnly swearing to retain her secret, provided she married him, she consented to become his wife. They went abroad immediately after their union; and some years after, on their return to England, none doubted that the little girl by whom they were accompanied was their child!

Sir Charles Kinglake barely took time to read over the important disclosures—which had been consigned to the secret drawer of

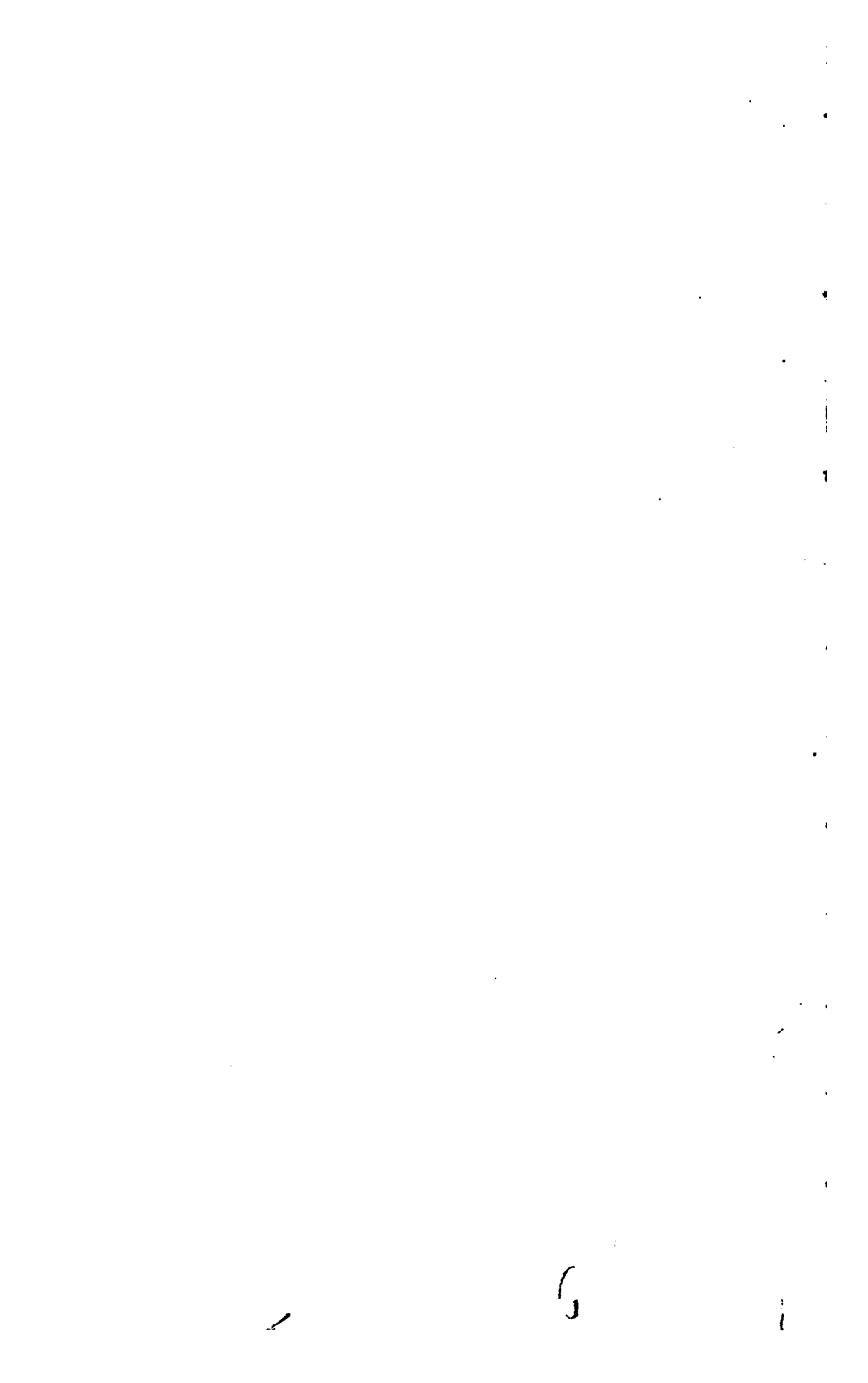
the casket, now so providentially broken—before he set off for France ; neither did he find it a difficult matter to prevail upon him whom he sought there, to return with him to London. Poor Rosalie, wondrously revived by a discovery which, by depriving her of a brother, restored to her a lover, felt convinced that in Mr. Burton she had still a more than parent ; and ere many days ; four happy faces might have been seen together at the Nabob's mansion in Belgrave Square, as the worthy and happy old man—leading Rosalie Clavering forward—kissed her blushing cheek, and then passed her into the arms of Percy Saville.

\* \* \* \* \*

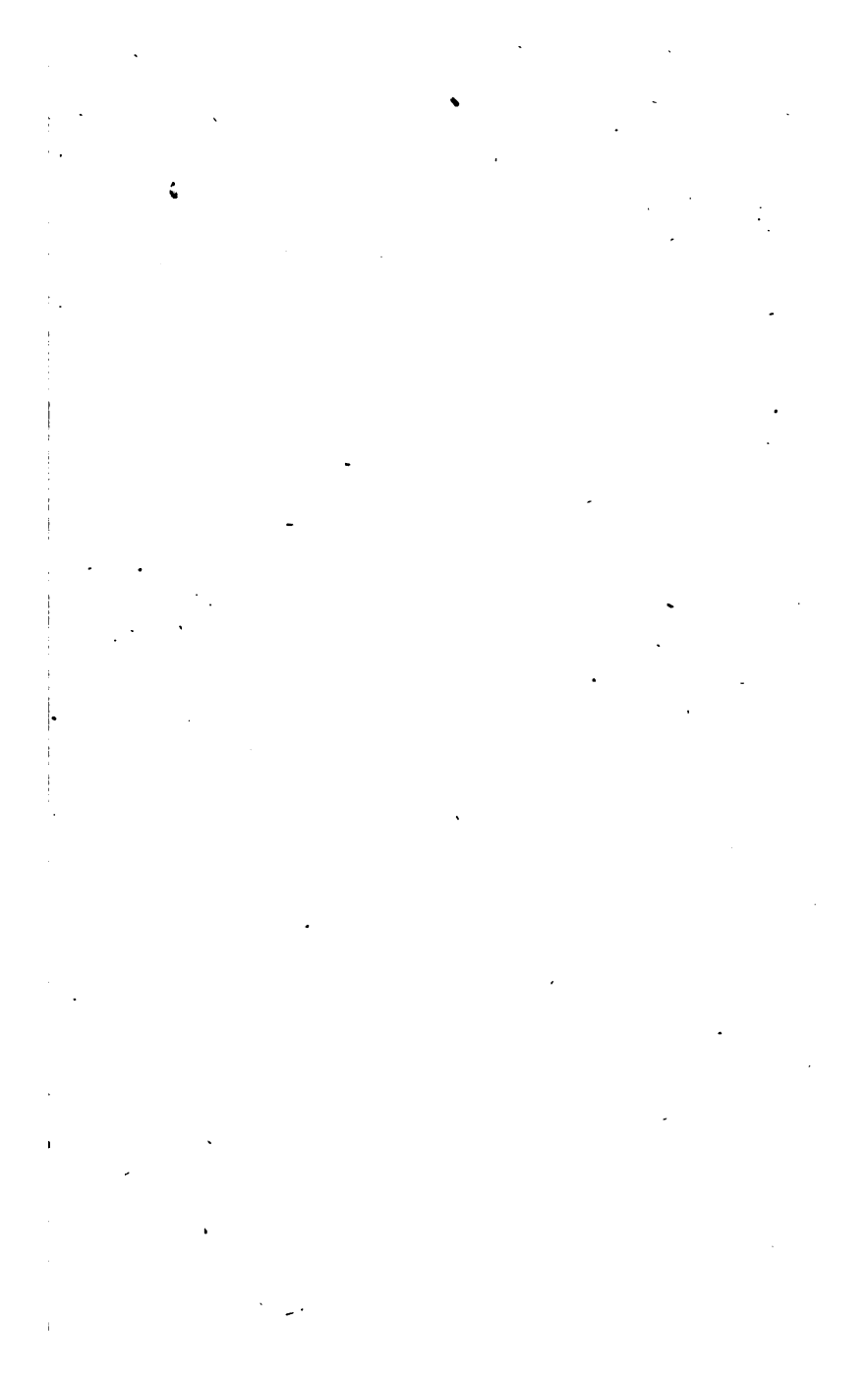
And here, I am told, that my third volume

must end ; and yet I have not got through half my recollections. But if, fortunately for me and my publisher, the Circulating Library World should evince a relish for this sample of my rough rambles, I promise them as many more, in somewhat the same vein, though perhaps in other regions, at no distant period.

THE END.



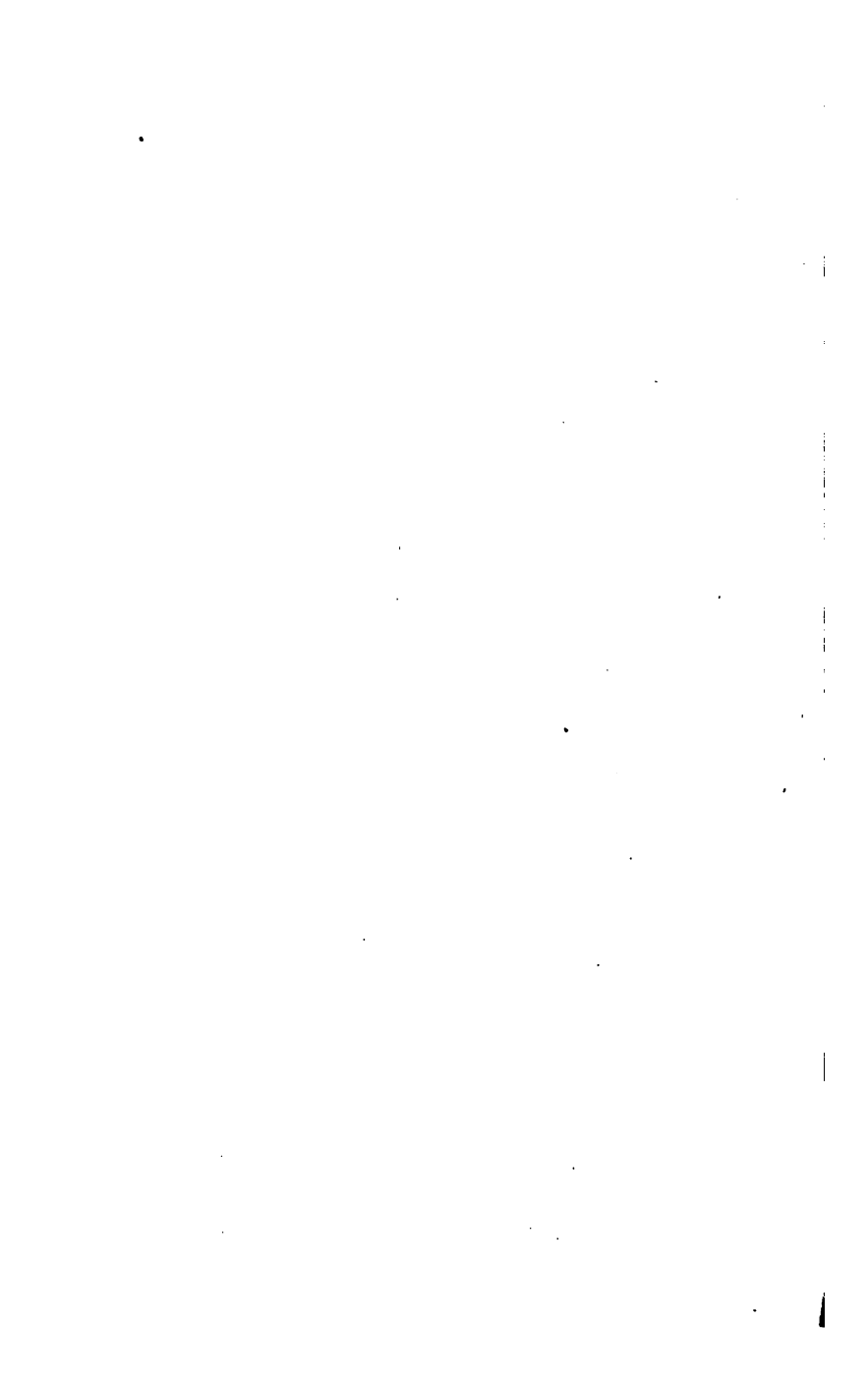


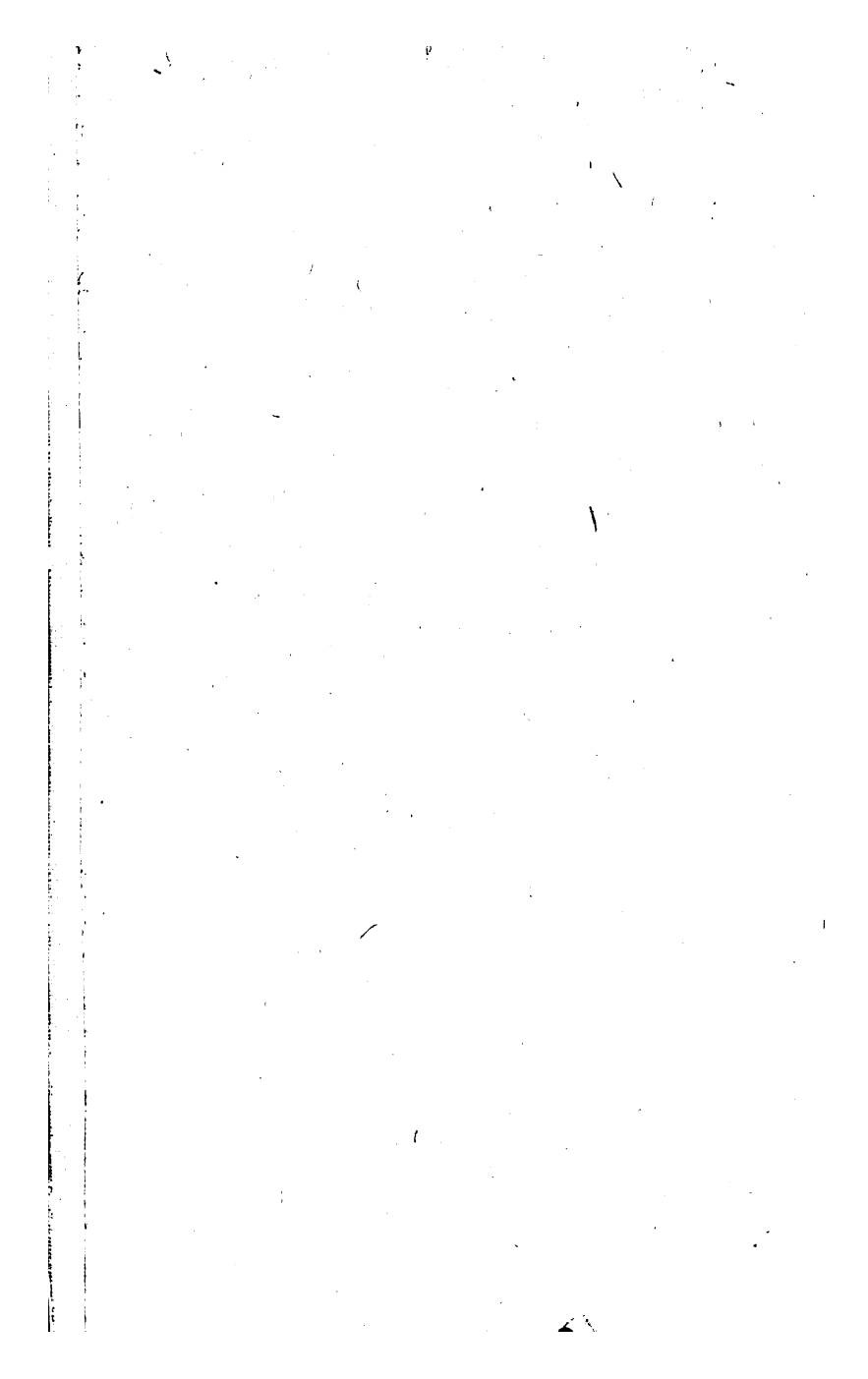


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